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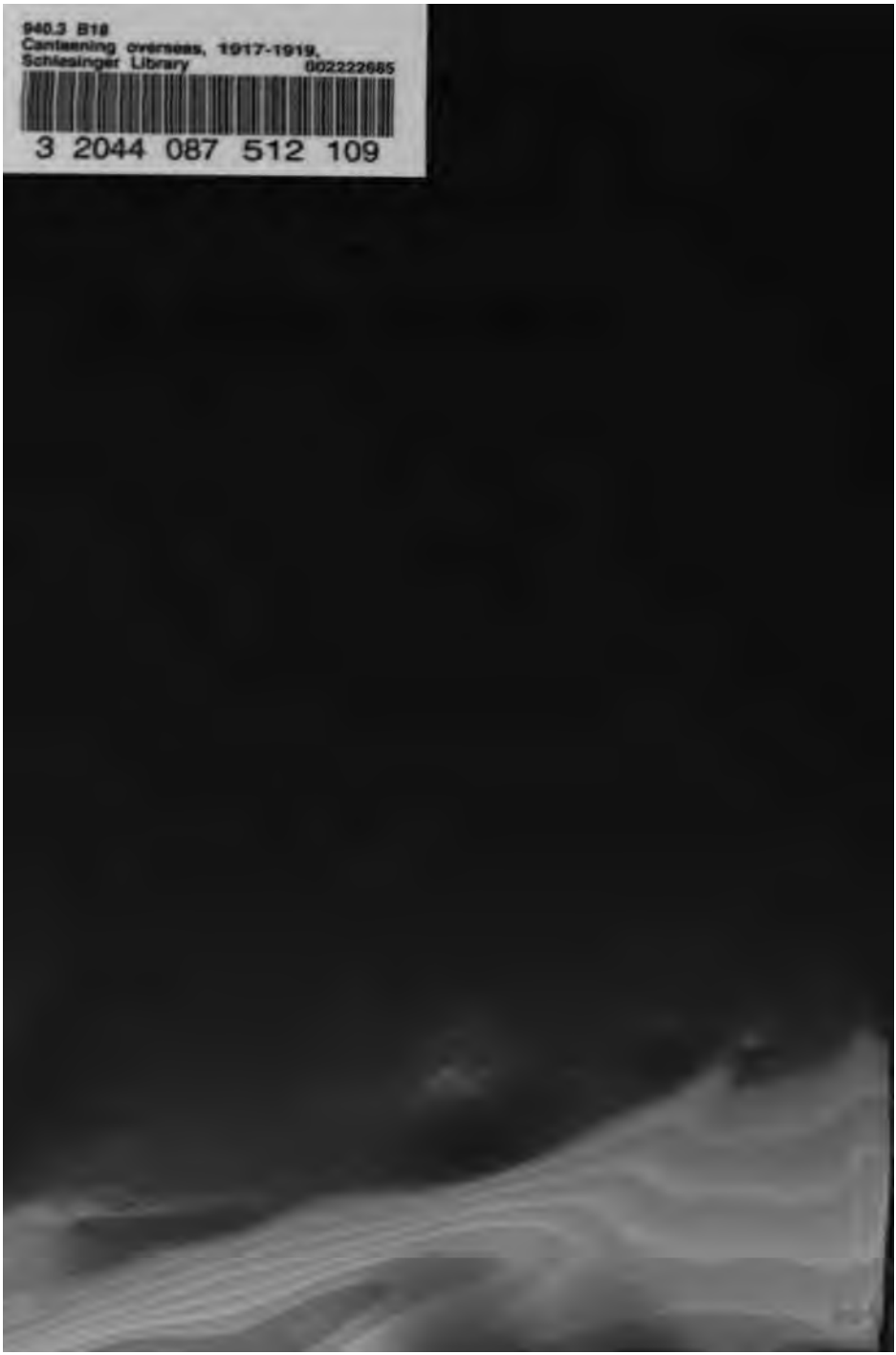

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A "RECOLLECTION" MAP

CANTEENING OVERSEAS

1917--1919

BY

MARIAN BALDWIN

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TO THE BOYS
WHO NEVER CAME BACK

This little record of work — which was privilege; of sacrifice — which was unself-conscious; of Courage — which was a commonplace; and, most of all, of Beauty, which was just gallant endurance of more than one dull job; — this record of what one Y. M. C. A. Worker did in France, is especially moving to me, because I was with her part of the time, and watched the ideal of Service unfold and blossom in her character. I am glad that her letters, telling so simply of the gay splendor of those dark days in France, have been gathered together in this little book.

MARGARET DELAND.

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Note: These are the original letters, except for insertion of names of places, persons, and a few other indications, which, because of the censorship, had perforce to be omitted from the letters as mailed from Europe.

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CANTEENING OVERSEAS

CHAPTER I

AT SEA

On Board *La Touraine,*
June 30th, 1917.

Even now that we are out of sight of land, it seems impossible that I am actually off to France and, for the first time in my life, traveling alone. Everything has happened so quickly since the American Fund for French Wounded found an opening for me in Paris that I suppose I am still somewhat dazed and bewildered. The fact that I don't know what it will all be like and that I can't look ahead makes it easier to be happy and live in the present. Of course I have had a bit of a taste in New York of the work that the A. F. F. W. is doing but its Headquarters in Paris will be different in some ways I fancy.

I can't get over how lucky I am to have this chance for I realize how few girls of my age are getting across, and I understood the grit and pluck which made you encourage me on my great adventure and send me along a path which has proved so dangerous of late.

As we drifted down the river, in the sunset

glow with two absurd tugs puffing alongside, I know that many eyes were moist and that the same thought was in all our minds. How many of this ship's company will see that sky-line again! It was very quiet, no one spoke much, and, little by little, the glow faded from the sky and one star after another appeared. I knew that you would be looking at those same stars down in Lakewood and that your thoughts and prayers were the same that filled my heart at that moment. Somehow distance does not separate, after all.

We waited near the Statue of Liberty until midnight — a rumor had it that a "personage" was to come on board. This individual was shrouded in mystery until we put to sea when it was given out that the party which had clambered aboard in the night was none other than the Italian Mission. Our spirits rose at once for, what with Frank Sayre on the boat and these distinguished Italian gentlemen, we shall doubtless be honored by a bigger convoy and so doubly safe. However, thus far we have but two destroyers following us. They can be seen distinctly outlined against the horizon, one on each side, and seem to be the same somber gray which all ships are affecting in this war. A sailor informed me this morning that we weren't in much danger for the first four or five days but that after that I might see some excitement. Here's hoping!

I have a small inside cabin and my roommate is quite a character. She is a native of Haiti, voluble and very portly — has four large pieces of baggage in our tiny stateroom, wears a costume which resembles a Mother Hubbard and smokes countless thin cigarettes that smell like incense! When I appeared, there didn't seem to be much room for me but, as she says, luckily I am small, and I was soon tucked into the upper berth with my belongings! She really isn't bad and after looking me over carefully told me that she didn't think we would fight and from that time has beamed upon me! She is going over to join her son who has been fighting with the French since the beginning of the war but will never go back to the Front now, having lost some fingers off each hand. She is so thankful, she says, that he hasn't lost more than his fingers.

La Touraine, July 3rd, 1917.

I have been moved to the Captain's table and as nothing but French is spoken I have had to take the fatal plunge also and find my vocabulary sadly shrunken after three years. However, I can understand perfectly and, as you know, I am more of a success as a listener anyway. The conversation is very worth while and I quite look forward to meal times. Frank Sayre is at our table, also Major and Mrs. Bert McCormick. The Major has been a member of the National Guard for years and went to Texas with his

squadron. He is now on his way to join the A. E. F. His father was former Ambassador to Russia, as you know, and Major McCormick was over there as a guest of the Grand Duke and spent quite a lot of time on the Russian front, so, of course, he is absolutely up on that end of things.

I have made friends with some of the Italian Mission, also a French Baron, a cavalry officer who has been out in Wyoming buying huge quantities of horses for the allied armies. Among the Italians, Signor Nitti seems to me the keenest and most interesting. He is a very loyal and patriotic person; he urged his son, who is only nineteen, to enlist as soon as Italy entered the war. From his portrait the son is a fine looking boy. As he has recently been wounded, Signor Nitti is in a fever of impatience to get to him.

We have about a hundred and fifty ambulance men on board who are on their way to join the Field, or the Norton-Harjes Service, in France. Among them is a Buffalo Unit and we have found a lot of friends in common. There are also a number of very young lads going over to join the Lafayette Escadrille. They tell me that they couldn't get into the American Aviation owing to the very strict physical test. I like one of these boys especially, Billy Tailer by name; he is very charming and thoughtful and has kept me supplied with sweet butter, honey and other delicacies which were showered upon him on the dock by kind friends.

Mrs. C., whom you introduced, seems very nice, but since I came to her rescue with the bath-steward she loves me like life. She needn't have bothered, for shortly after our joint conversation on the subject of baths, she left her port-hole open by mistake and two tidal waves entered her state-room one after the other. Mrs. C. emerged looking like a drowned rat!

La Touraine, July 4th, 1917.

We have run into a hot wave and, of course, I am perfectly happy although thankful for my thin clothes. Every one knows every one else now and we are having a wonderful time. I feel like the only girl at a house-party of almost two hundred men. All the other women on board are married and older with the exception of one very charming Quaker bride who is about my age. It's an interesting bunch for, of course, every one here is going abroad with some definite work in view which makes them more or less worth while.

This morning we had a very moving meeting to celebrate the first Fourth since our country entered the war. Frank Sayre and Major McCormick both spoke exceedingly well. Every one was much stirred and sobered by the realization of the magnitude of the job ahead.

On account of the intense heat, Mrs. C. and I, accompanied by our life preservers, have been sleeping on deck. We each have a mattress and a steamer rug spread out and find this method of

spending the night infinitely superior to our suffocating little cabins. Hosts of people have followed our example. At about 4:30 A. M., the sailors begin to appear with their pails and mops and then the deck takes on a strange appearance; pajama clad figures walking nonchalantly about!

La Touraine, July 5th, 1917.

Every day a little newspaper is printed on board. The news comes by wireless. The sheet appears about 11 A. M. To-day we are rejoicing over the fact that the Russians have resumed fighting on the southwestern Front — it is so vital just now that they should hold on, it takes one's breath away to contemplate what would happen if they didn't.

This letter, I know, is most messy but I carry it around all day with me and it takes on the atmosphere of the boat.

To-morrow we shall have been gone a week and it seems perfectly incredible. I have had and am having such a good time that I haven't really been homesick yet, but I expect, when I get to Paris and start work, I shall have an awful dose of it.

There are all kinds of rumors going about which seem to increase as we approach the war zone. The Captain won't open his mouth on the subject of submarines although there are supposed to be three pursuing us. All we know is that we change our course constantly and are

zig-zagging our way across the Atlantic. Our two destroyers turned back after we had been out two days and since then we have had no convoy whatever. Every one misses the sight of those two watchful gray forms on the horizon and since they disappeared we have felt a very wee dot on a very big ocean!

La Touraine, July 8th, 1917.

Friday night we entered the war zone at seven o'clock but you would never know it. Aside from boat-drills and sleeping on deck people act as usual. The officers on the boat are very particular about the drills; several times the alarm has sounded and we have been taught just what to do in case we are hit. It's very funny to see the people rush below for their valuables, strapping on their life preservers as they go (which we always have near at hand wherever we are — on deck or in the saloon). In about five minutes we are lined up, divided into groups in front of our own particular life-boats which have been swung out over the sea ready to lower. Every one is checked off and each man is told what woman he is to save. (Great excitement at this point as no one of the men wants to save the lady detailed to him, but some one in another boat!) We all stand about looking too absurd and bumping into each other's life preservers on the crowded upper deck. Finally the signal is given which releases us, and we all file down

again to take off the clumsy heavy jackets of safety and regale ourselves with various amusements on the deck.

Rumor has it that two ships have been sunk, one in the course ahead of where we were yesterday and the other about an hour behind us. No one knows how many lives were lost. Perhaps those three submarines were more fact than fiction after all.

It is thought that we should make Bordeaux by Tuesday morning if all goes well and that the convoy which should have met us days ago will be with us to-night.

This being Sunday, the boys on board are very much dressed up, that is to say they are wearing clean shirts and have their hair brushed! It's a perfect day, warm and cloudless, and I've been lying in the sun adding to my coat of tan. We all feel quite sad that the voyage is so nearly over — it has been such loads of fun and I shall hate saying good-by to every one.

La Touraine, July 11th, 1917.

Actually in sight of land and all danger past! Last night was a great strain — Our convoy didn't find us till dawn. It was a wild night, with torrents of rain and a high wind. How our little boat pitched and tossed! No one was allowed below so we paced the deck all night. Finally the dawn came and the storm abated and we realized how fortunate we had been. Our

chances wouldn't have been nearly as good of slipping through the submarine ring with a brilliant moon to show us up.

I am feeling wonderfully well; physically the trip has done me no end of good. We shall land soon now and in a few hours my cable will have reached you and your anxiety will be over. So ends the first lap of the journey. Now for the real venture. Thank God for the opportunity and for you unselfish ones at home.

CHAPTER II

PARIS

En route from Bordeaux to Paris,
July 18th, 1917.

On landing yesterday I went straight to the Hôtel de France and it certainly was good to have room to turn around in: as for a bed with real springs I greeted it with enthusiasm! Towards evening Frank and I took a long walk about the city. A port town always interests me and we saw it all at the loveliest time of day. The harbor was full of fishing smacks and small craft of all kinds and exquisite tones in the sails and rigging. The last rays of the sun cast a rosy hue over everything, making one think at once of Venice and the days before the war. Later we wandered through some of the oldest parts of Bordeaux and I really felt that I was abroad again! The narrow winding streets and cobblestones, with here and there an ancient façade or doorway and everywhere, in the poorest alleys, a bit of a vine or potted plant in the windows. How do they manage to make it all so picturesque and alluring?

The women and the old men are doing everything and it is surprising to see the lady conduc-

tors. On this train they use women entirely, even in the dining car. The war hasn't robbed them of vivacity or their beautiful complexions and I believe they are even prettier in their simple black working clothes than before.

We are at present passing through the famous vineyards and I have never seen the country look so beautiful. The crops seem in perfect condition, thanks to the patient labor of these wonderful women, and the grain waves in profusion everywhere. I have longed for you at every turn, how you would enjoy it all. The poppies are in their prime and, as the train whirls by, they look like immense splashes of red — almost like stains of blood against the gold of the wheat.

I have just come in from a very excellent meal in the dining car — the food was served promptly by two French girls of the peasant type and with a speed that was wonderful, the car holding over thirty persons.

Paris, July 13th, 1917.

I'm so thankful for a spot which I can call my own. Aunt T—— is wonderful, of course, had flowers, fruits, candy, etc., in my room and is proceeding to spoil me as usual.

Mrs. Needham has already told me much about the work the American Fund for French Wounded is doing on this side. It seems that the greater part of its workers are being increasingly absorbed by the Red Cross and for that

reason there are openings and I shall be able to step right in, which pleases me no end. The work will consist of packing, mostly. The supplies from the States are unpacked, sorted and divided among the hospitals all over France which the American Fund is supplying. My job will be packing the things into bales of burlap, sewing them up and marking them for shipment. The addresses are printed on the burlap with a large brush and I am more than thankful that I know how to print. Everything seems to come in handy in war-work.

Paris is as beautiful as ever but one is not allowed to forget that it is war time, which is, of course, as it should be. For instance, two days a week no one is allowed meat; one day no tea or coffee, and one day no sweets. Naturally these rules are being made stricter all the time as the food gets scarcer. There is no hot water anywhere except Saturday and Sunday and, of course, the "war bread" which is a bit like our rye bread and really good.

Hôtel Lutetia, Paris, July 14th, 1917.

Mrs. Needham has told me what is proper and has given me a list of restaurants where one can lunch safely with a man! Just now I am going out a great deal, but in a day or two most of the boys will be gone.

I started in work yesterday and adore it. Our headquarters are marvelously situated on the

Champs Elysées and the packing rooms open on two sides and look out on the gardens surrounding the Café des Ambassadeurs. Although I am on my feet continually, the work doesn't seem to tire me and you can imagine my joy at having a regular job which will keep me busy from morning until night.

Paris, July 16th, 1917.

Last night I witnessed my first air raid and it was every bit as thrilling as anticipated. I was awakened out of a sound sleep by a chorus of the most gruesome sirens imaginable, that, combined with the noise of the fire engines rushing through the streets and the blowing of horns made it quite impossible to go back to sleep. Also at that moment Aunt T—— came to my door fully dressed and told me to put on my clothes in case it should prove to be a bad raid and wiser to descend under ground. After the first burst of alarms a deathly stillness fell upon the city, all the lights were switched off and we were left in the pitch dark. Aunt T—— and I hung out of my window and awaited developments. It was a night to dream of, absolutely clear and the sky a-glitter with a myriad of stars. It seemed incredible that out of that vast stretch of beauty should come those death-dealing creatures on wings. However in a few moments we knew that the Boches had crossed our lines and were flying on Paris, for at once a dozen or so French pursuit

planes put off and in a moment they could be seen dashing here and there across the heavens like so many fire-flies. These planes carry one light and when they swoop down rapidly, it looks exactly like a falling star. All at once the anti-air-craft guns began and in all my life I have never heard such a racket. I didn't believe there could be anything louder and then suddenly a bomb dropped and the deafening crash completely obliterated for a second all other sounds. They say this morning that two enemy planes were over Paris and five bombs in all were dropped. The list of dead and wounded has not yet been published but it is a long one. The war has suddenly become a reality.

Yesterday, Sunday, I lunched with Aunt T—— and Uncle J—— and later took a walk with Billy Tailer. He is here for a week before going off to his flying school at Avord. The danger in aviation is very great, much more so than any one in America realizes. The average life of an aviator at the front is six months. Bill has been telling me the most hair-raising tales! It seems that any boy going into it has practically no chance at all unless he is wounded so severely that he can't go back to the Front. It all makes me perfectly sick. Billy is only twenty-three — the most boyish and appealing person you can imagine. I simply cannot realize the danger he is going into. Surely it is incredible that such a buoyant personality could be sacrificed.

Last night Uncle J—— took us over to "The Gilded Snail" for dinner and we ate the genuine article with a gusto which, on my part at least, was entirely put on. The prices here in Paris are fabulous and even the bare necessities of life seem like an extravagance. However the city itself never has been so fascinating. To a great extent it has lost the froth of other days and the real Paris stands out as never before. For the first time I see why it has been called the heart of this wonderful, indomitable country. But now it seems to represent in its atmosphere not only the heart but the soul of France.

Its streets are no less gay; most of the women are in black to be sure and yet soldiers from every Allied country in the world are now to be seen everywhere and the vivid colors of their uniforms brighten up the boulevards and gleam among the trees along the Champs Elysées and in the Bois. Naturally the *blessés* are everywhere and on every side one sees one-armed and one-legged *poilus,* leading perhaps some *camarade* who has lost his sight. O there is much of the pathetic! — and yet somehow the extraordinary spirit and indomitable will of these people is catching and one holds to any scrap of cheer with the greater tenacity, not knowing just when another bit of it will come one's way. The French have learned economy in the war — even to the hoarding of sunshine.

The thing that helps me most is the sight of

our own soldiers in Paris. One meets them everywhere, khaki-clad groups strolling past the marvelous shops in the Rue de la Paix, with a very American nonchalance, or piloting some very *petite* and *chic* French mademoiselles through the parks or into one of the many restaurants about the city.

I don't think I should have had the face to come over here before our entry into the war. Those Americans who have been here since the beginning say that the situation grew very strained during the winter and while those numerous notes were traveling back and forth between Washington and the German Government!

Now, of course, that is all changed. Americans can at least hold up their heads and France with her generous heart forgets how long we were in coming in the joy of at last welcoming us to her shores. Our soldiers are being made much of but with their show of wealth they somewhat bewilder the French people. Money is fairly thrown about by the advance guard of our A. E. F., the boys having no idea of the value of the francs which they carry in huge wads. To the *poilu,* who earns eight cents a day, the Sammie seems a veritable millionaire.

Our American army headquarters and also the chief headquarters of the American Red Cross are at the Hôtel Crillon. The space directly in front of the hotel on the Place de la Concorde is generally swarming with our soldiers. Long

rows of khaki-colored military automobiles are drawn up along the curb. These are the first that have appeared in Paris and are looked upon with great interest and entire approval by the French population. In fact, each United States transport that arrives safely is reported with columns of enthusiastic comment in all the Paris papers. They only urge us to "hurry"; and God grant that we will.

Paris, July 18th, 1917.

For the past few days I have been doing light carpentering at the Alcazar in the Champs Elysées (our A. F. F. W. Headquarters are in the building which once was the Alcazar d'Eté, a great amusement hall). As most of our men went back on us and some of the cases had to be closed at once for shipment, I've been hammering and sawing until my lily-white hands are rough as a man's and a perfect sight!

The weather has come off very warm and damp and to-day every one has felt more or less like a rag. However our working clothes are most comfortable — little Dutch caps to keep the dust out of our hair and blue aprons made like smocks. I am already so much at home in the Alcazar that I feel as though I had been born here.

If this is to catch the American mail I must close. I have such heaps to tell you and so little time that it is quite maddening.

Hôtel Vernet, Paris,
July 22nd, 1917.

The last week has been so fearfully crowded that I haven't been able to accomplish anything outside of my work, also I have taken on another job.

Here at the Alcazar we work until 5 P. M. and after that we are free for the day. I was beginning to wonder how I could make my evenings more useful when this opening came.

Early in the week at the end of a very hot and busy day, word was sent that they needed a few American girls in the new Y. M. C. A. canteen which is being opened for the Army and Navy at 31 Avenue Montaigne. The request was urgent, and, as no one else from the Alcazar was free to go, I told them that I'd come and help out, if only for a few hours.

When I arrived I found that they were very short-handed indeed and would be grateful for a bit of help every day. I am therefore going to the canteen from 5 to 9 P. M. each evening and of course simply love it. In the first place I have the chance to work *with* our own soldiers,— a thing which I don't get in the A. F. F. W.— and then it fills in the evenings, and I don't feel such a slacker.

The Y. M. C. A. Headquarters are situated in a stunning old building, the court-yard of which has been turned into a sort of tea garden. A small chalet has been built at the extreme end

and this serves as kitchen and pantry in one. A huge counter extends across the front and is covered with large plates of sandwiches, cakes, etc. The rest of the court-yard is fenced off by greens and box, leaving a big space for numerous little green tables and chairs. Here the hungry mob congregates, and it is the job of the various girls to take their orders and serve them with the good things that are concocted in the little chalet-canteen. It has become most popular owing to the fact that ice cream, cake and other sweets are now practically impossible to get in Paris. The Y. M. C. A. gets all its supplies straight from America and we have the sugar and flour necessary for making the things which the boys love.

Mrs. Teddy Roosevelt and Mrs. Verley are running the place and in the past two days a girl that I knew at Farmington has turned up which makes it nice for me.

Yesterday, Aunt T—— had Madame Migot and her son Roger to luncheon and we had an unusually interesting time. You know her older son, Georges, was so badly wounded during the first year of the war that his back and legs are paralyzed and he will probably never walk again. Instead of lying around and bemoaming his fate he is doing most important head work for the government. The younger son, Roger, is home now *en permission* and it was generous of his mother to share with us even an hour of his precious eight days at home. His expression shows much that

he has been through and his life at the Front must be a veritable Hell. He lives by himself in what is left of a tiny hut just behind the firing line, and goes out day and night, no matter what the danger, to bring in the wounded. His hut is overrun with rats as big as kittens. He told me that the only company he has are three or four wild canaries. He found them as babies in their nest. The mother-bird vanished, so he took them home in his pocket and they have been with him ever since. They sing continually and when he comes back at night, he has only to whistle and they come to him flying, the well-trained little things! Naturally when there is fighting, he is in the trenches all day and then his rats and birds keep house by themselves.

Sometimes at night he takes two helpers, and makes pilgrimages to all the cemeteries near at hand which have been torn up and mutilated by the Germans. He straightens the graves and puts up rude crosses where they have been shot away. In this way he has found the graves of many of his friends, whose families hadn't known where their sons were buried. Madame Migot just didn't take her eyes off him for one minute during luncheon. It must take superhuman strength and courage to let him go back to that ghastly place.

These French women are simply marvelous. When their men are home on permission they put on a bold, cheerful front, and unless one looks

at their eyes one would never know the crucifixion that is going on behind that calm, sweet exterior. When I see the pathetic wrecks that limp back from those trenches, I can understand a bit why some of these young girls wear the look of a woman of fifty.

It seems as though I must stretch out a hand and snatch back the ones I love; and yet our country and its honor never seemed half so precious as just now, or half so worth suffering and dying for.

It is all so inspiring and so tiring! All Americans have the same experience when they first come over and before they get a bit hardened to it all. The emotional strain is terrific. One is keyed to concert pitch all the time — till the mere sight of our khaki-clad boys marching through Paris on their way to camp, brings one to the verge of tears. There is so much color and experience crammed into each day that I can't begin to write of. The whole situation is colossal; it is simply impossible to express it in words. My letters sound childish and scrappy but I only get a chance to write a sentence or two at a time, so you must excuse them.

I haven't presented any of the letters of introduction that you gave me. I am rushed and there isn't a soul but is so busy that even friendly calls have had to be abolished, as there is such a demand for every one's time.

M. suggests in her last letter that I read Vic-

tor Hugo and get myself into the atmosphere of Paris. I don't suppose any one realizes at home that the "atmosphere" has changed, and that what Victor Hugo depicted is past and over. I couldn't any more settle down now to the reading of classics, or go about seeing sights, than I could fly. One's surroundings cry out against that sort of thing, and the Great Present looms larger than all the rich centuries which make the Past of France.

If we are to win this horrible war, every man, woman and child must concentrate on the Present and only stop in order to store up strength for the continuation of endeavor. Now that America has at last come in, this country and its people will be reorganized into a stronger working power than ever. It will however take, while the war lasts, every ounce of strength, every bit of brain and all the ingenuity that we have. I believe that France is entirely alive to this fact and those who are making the days count do nothing outside of what the present situation demands — and as you can fancy the demand is gigantic.

One of my *Touraine* friends, Dick, has been in Paris for the past day or so before starting out with his ambulance. He left here this morning looking splendidly fit and handsome in his uniform. He has a gentleness about him which should fit him for his job, and I pray that he may come through safely. They are go-

ing into the worst of the fighting in Flanders and are to replace a section that has been completely shot to pieces. Bill Tailer writes me enthusiastically from the French Aviation School at Avord where he is learning the terrible and alluring game. He simply adores it.

We have had two more air raids; one was pretty bad, but somehow one gets used to anything and people take them quite calmly.

I am kept busy hours after work writing to these various lads at the Front and in camps. It is extraordinary how much letters and little packages mean "out there." Of course it is the thought that some one nearer than home is thinking of them. The French tell me that the morale of the entire army depends on just such little things.

I am about to adopt a French *filleul* (godson) and I expect he will be the first of many. There are so pathetically many who have no one to take a bit of an interest in them. Some of the women here in Paris have twenty or thirty of these *filleuls* to whom they write.

This morning I went down to the Gare du Nord with Mrs. Colby, one of our Alcazar packers, and saw the French soldiers off for the Front. The Red Cross donates cigarettes and cigars to be distributed each day, and then different girls and women go down and distribute them. The French Red Cross gives out drinks and sandwiches too. The point of it is that the

men are, most of them, very sad and downhearted. They have to say good-by to their families at home, and the half hour or so between the time they leave their homes and the time the train starts is very hard for them. So we all try to be as gay as possible and they are like children in their quick response. I have never enjoyed anything more. They are for the most part entirely respectful, and so gallant and pathetically grateful. They adore the cigarettes, but are even more keen over the tiny American flags, and are heartbroken if they go off unadorned. It is the same all over France; even in the trenches they are mad for an American flag to stick on.

Just as the last French troop train had pulled out, in came a whole train of our own blessed men, and perhaps we weren't glad to see them. They had come straight up from the Mexican border, and sailed from New York only eight days ago. Of course they were all pleased to death to find some one who could speak English and told me all the latest news and much about Edison's extraordinary new gun run by electricity. "That ought to finish the Germans," one of them said. It certainly seems as though it might, and how France will exult over the news!

These men had a pretty close call getting over, but luck seems to be with us, and they told me each month now would see half a million men

from the U. S. in France. It is perfectly glorious.

As you see, we have moved over from the Lutetia and are very comfortably settled here. The Hôtel Vernet is as modern as any, nice and clean, and very much quieter and more private than the Lutetia. We have good rooms on the court, but with a patch of sky and a green vine to look at. Our little street is just off the Champs Élysées, and the Métro takes me to my work in fifteen minutes, so it is most convenient.

I am going to send this letter along without adding more. I have a notion the censor dislikes fat envelopes.

Hôtel Vernet, Paris, August 11th, 1917.

This week has been a hummer and I have scarcely stopped to breathe, not one moment to write a word in, so I have had to wait until now. It is Saturday, and we therefore get a half holiday. I have refused to go anywhere as I have dozens of letters to write and oceans of clothes to mend, not to mention a bit of a rest and making the most of a hot water day.

I really have done a good week's work at the Alcazar and feel like Dad's little boy: "How pleasant is Saturday night when you've tried all the week to be good." At any rate, I'm feeling satisfied as I think of all the hospital supplies that I have packed and shipped off to the Front.

It is good to feel that, although a girl, I have the chance to do my bit where it is needed.

We have at present hundreds of cases pouring in all the time, and such a limited supply of workers to unpack them. There are two thousand cases in the Red Cross Clearing House that we simply can't handle for the moment, our Alcazar being stocked to the roof. At present I am a Jack-of-all-trades and run from one department to the other. In between times I am learning the very complicated system of shipping. However, it's fine to be busy, and of course I enjoy it tremendously.

Paris, August 12th, 1917.

I am writing at the canteen during the few moments before going on duty, it being positively the only chance I have had in days. I'm afraid this will be rather jerky as I am called off every few minutes to cut cake, make sandwiches, etc. My work here at the Y goes on as usual in the evenings, except on Sundays when I am here during the afternoon hours too.

Last Sunday night, Mrs. Roosevelt, two or three of the other girls and myself went up to the little service which the Y has for the soldiers each week. It was very impressive. So many of these men are just back from the lines for a few days, or on their way up to the Front, and the realization of how uncertain life has become for them makes them look very serious. The

place is always packed and a mass of khaki. It seemed so strange to be there, singing the familiar hymns which I have sung ever since I can remember. Particular ones I always associate with the peaceful Sunday nights at Farmington — such a contrast to the grim atmosphere that surrounds all such gatherings now. It stirs one strangely.

Paris, August 14th, 1917.

Yesterday your delightful friends, Monsieur and Madame Meslier, called and asked me to dinner. It's a crowded week but I made a big effort and got time off, as I remember your telling me that these people are characteristic of the very best French types. Paris is such a hash of different nationalities that I long for a glimpse of the real thing. Few Americans are getting to know any but the middle and lower classes for you know how difficult it is to be admitted into the higher circles, especially now that these good people are smothered in war work.

Naturally I had a beautiful time. I was scared stiff on account of my French, but I have improved some and got along better than I had anticipated. The Mesliers have a beautiful apartment on the Avenue Montaigne, very French and lovely with wonderful pictures and rare old bric-a-brac from all parts of the world. I have never seen two old people so much in love with each

other, there is nothing the least bit slushy about them but one can't help seeing that each worships the ground the other walks on and such exquisite courtesy and consideration you have never seen! When I arrived, Madame Meslier kissed me on both cheeks and, if I had been the daughter of the family, I couldn't have been made more of. I was told that I was the image of my *chère mère,* which naturally made a great hit with me.

I think they thought that I represented America and all the enthusiasm and gratefulness which they felt for my country was showered upon me until I was completely abashed. There is no doubt but that the French think that we have come as the saviors of the world, and no words can express how they "honor us for risking all perils and fighting for the right — three thousand miles away from home." The Mesliers are both very brilliant mentally and were keen to hear what the point of view was in the States. I told all I knew which wasn't much, but they were very nice and listened to me.

An ancient butler served us at table and I'm sure he must have been in the family for several centuries at least! At any rate he feels called upon at times to use a bit of discipline, and talks right up to Monsieur and Madame which they take absolutely as a matter of course! The food was simply marvelous and as I hadn't seen anything like it since leaving the States I'm afraid I ate too much, but really couldn't help it, every-

thing was so delicious. After dinner numerous liqueurs were passed around. I tried two different kinds and they were bully and, I guess, as old as the butler!

Monsieur and Madame brought me home themselves (as they didn't think my Father would want me entrusted to a maid!) and embraced me several times at the doorway of my hotel, much to the edification of the concièrge. I hope they approved of me; I tried to be very proper and wore my meekest expression.

I have two French *filleuls* now, one I picked up the other night when we were seeing the soldiers off at the Gare du Nord and the other was willed to me by a girl who was going home to America. The one I found the other night is on his way to Salonika, has a fine sensitive face and looks thirty although he is only twenty-three. The other boy is in a hospital at Toulouse with a wounded leg. These lads adore letters more than anything on earth and every once in a while I send a package of sausage, tobacco and sweets. They get such drab things to eat and it makes the long months and the terrible monotony a bit more bearable. There were a whole bunch of un-marrained (godmother-less) men at the station that night, and we each took a godson.

Paris, August 22nd, 1917.

This afternoon I had the most interesting time. I had just gotten back to the Alcazar after

luncheon, when one of the girls who drives our *camions* of supplies about, came in and asked for a companion to go out with her to the Versailles hospitals (they don't allow the drivers to go any distance out of Paris alone). Mrs. Churchill, the head of our packing room, volunteered to let me go and of course I jumped at the chance. It was a really warm day, the first in weeks, and perhaps I wasn't glad to get a sniff of country air. The trees and flowers along the way were ravishing. I've been so busy during the past few weeks that I haven't had a moment even to go out and sit under a tree in the Bois, so you can imagine what a real joy it was to get a bit of country.

We left supplies at three different hospitals, two of which were situated in convents. The grounds all walled in, but so lovely when one got inside. Acres of land, shady vistas and flowers and fruit trees everywhere. The *blessés* were out in mobs strolling about in their pyjamas, and poor one-armed men playing ball along the paths.

We were taken all about by the sweet nuns who were most curious over our Ford *camion* and speechless with astonishment that women should actually drive such a thing. The entire street turned out to see us off. It was very funny.

Paris, September 2nd, 1917.

The news from Russia this morning is certainly discouraging, and I do hope that the shock of seeing Riga actually taken may put some punch into the Russian soldiers. Of course we all expected the capture but it is a shock just the same.

If I wasn't so busy all the time the war news would make me perfectly sick. Luckily no one has time to stop and think. I can't half realize what an unusually unique time I am having and I don't suppose I shall until years hence. At any rate the past two months are the most all-around satisfactory ones I have ever spent. The work in connection with the Y. M. C. A. has brought many new interests, and there have been a score of tiny happenings which have made me thankful that I was here and as though perhaps I was of some small use.

Paris, September 8th, 1917

Isn't the Russian news fierce? I've never seen anything like the way it has taken the punch out of every one. I was down at the Gare du Nord yesterday doing a little work for the Red Cross, distributing cigarettes, etc., among the outgoing French soldiers. We couldn't seem to cheer them, and I didn't see any of the usual smiles. The ray of light which the U. S. troops brought when they began coming over has, for the moment, been completely obliterated. The

papers don't deny that it is the worst blow the Allies have received since the war began, and it is as though a black cloud had descended upon every one.

I am getting so fierce about the Germans I could fairly commit an atrocity! But then every one feels that way, when he sees the things they have done here. On top of the bad news one hears that the storms have ruined the fruit, and destroyed the wheat crop, and the poor peasants are terribly down over the prospect of a winter with no coal and less food than during the past.

Lyons-la-Fôret, Normandy,
September 19th, 1917.

I haven't written for the past ten days for two reasons. In the first place we have never been so busy, and in the second place the war news has been so terrible that I knew I couldn't write anything but a blue letter. So it seemed better to wait until I had something cheerful to tell you.

Behold us at present off on a bat, and in the most delicious country imaginable. Aunt T—— and I have both been getting a bit tired and also felt that we must get a glimpse of the country before the summer had vanished. At the Alcazar, they were most keen for me to take a little vacation so it seemed a propitious time to store up a bit of extra energy for the coming winter. We therefore left Paris very early in the morning, rode on the train about an hour and motored

the rest of the way. Such a country as it is! The dew was still on the grass when we reached the little station and everything fresh and beautiful in the morning light. We're on the eastern edge of Normandy and here the war hasn't as yet made so much impression, at least not to the outward eye. Of course one sees no men at all except Boche prisoners tilling the ground, and somehow one doesn't think of them as men!

The country looks wonderfully rich and well kept, and the women marvels of industry. The storms have not hit this corner of France and the crops are somewhat protected by the famous Lyons Forest, on the edge of which our little town is situated. It's a quaint spot, with narrow winding streets, and rich in color and beauty. The forest itself is one of the most beautiful that I have ever seen, and to our city-accustomed eyes seems a veritable paradise, with its miles of gigantic trees, the moss-covered ground and the winding paths through the green.

These peasants are most interesting and I am glad to get a glimpse of French life in war time from this angle. I notice in talking with the women and the old, old men that if anything they are fiercer against the Boches than those to whom the war is much more of a reality. In those little villages they are personally safe, and quite a distance from the Front. They have no air raids, and except for the absence of their men folk, life continues much as before. But if one thinks

that they are asleep and less alive to the outrages of the common enemy than those unfortunates who live close to the lines, then one doesn't understand the immense unity that has made France stand as one man during three years of unspeakable hell. Any hurt or insult inflicted against any part or individual of this land is felt and taken personally by the country as a whole.

We spend most of our time jogging about in a delightful high dog cart. An old peasant woman, the town bakeress and the owner of the vehicle, drives us, and generally talks the whole way, which is very amusing. She told us that her horse was one that was captured from the Germans and for that reason she bought him for a bargain, as few people want even a horse that is Boche!

Sometimes we take along a couple of her little grandchildren of whom there seems a limitless supply, and she tells us how hard it is for her young but very weary looking daughter to bring up this large family alone and with her husband fighting far away in Salonika. The first year of the war this young wife took the two littlest children and made the perilous crossing to spend her husband's short leave with him. She must have been a picturesque figure in her Normandy cap and costume and with those two wee children. The very first time she had ever been more than a few kilometers away from her birthplace!

How this war has stirred the civilized world, even to its farthest sleepiest nooks and corners!

I am dropping with sleep after all this fresh air so must stop for now and turn in. I wish you could enjoy the view out of my casement window to-night. Quaint pointed roofs against a sky powdered with stars, shadows of trees heavy with apples in the foreground, and a delicious odor of flowers and dank grass. Perfect stillness except from time to time the far distant boom of guns, which means another raid on Paris. But here peace and beauty unutterable. Would to God one could say as much of the rest of this poor land.

En route from Lyons-la-Fôret to Paris,
September 26th, 1917.

It's very hard to leave this exquisite country but after the first day or two it seemed strange not to have anything to do and I don't believe I could stand it for very long.

Yesterday we visited two English camps in the vicinity of Lyons, the first composed of a handful of English and Canadian officers and four hundred and eighty-five prisoners (Boches). The English keep them there to cut timber in the forest which is made into charcoal and shipped to the Front, where it is burned for warmth. Its great asset is that it doesn't make any smoke. In this camp they turn out sixty tons a day.

The Boches live in splendid looking tents and huts in a large fenced off area, with thick barbed wire all around. They have fine food, their own German cooks to cook for them, a canteen where they can buy all they need and are paid good wages for all they do. This is characteristic treatment of all Boche prisoners in France and, when we hear of the cruelty and torture used by the Germans towards Allied prisoners, it makes me so mad I can't see.

The second camp we went to was even more interesting as it was made up entirely of Hindus, with the exception of the English officers, who brought them over from India and who have them in charge here. The camp is situated on the edge of the forest. Flocks of mahogany stained tents everywhere, with their picturesque, beturbaned occupants. You can't imagine how strange it seemed to see those black people camping in the quiet Normandy landscape, and as one of the young officers told us how they had left their warmth and beloved tropics to come into a strange land, I found a respect in me growing, not only for these weird black boys — but for the English and their great genius in colonization. When you realize that it is only a relatively short time since the general mutiny in the very part of India from where these men came, it is indeed wonderful that 1914 should see the Hindus volunteering their services, undertaking the long voyage, being attacked by submarine and finally

setting up their picturesque camp in the cold and distant country of an alien race. All this of their own free will, and for the sake of the once despised English master!

Surely if England has become the great and powerful nation that she is to-day, there must be some fine, human influence behind it. Her colonies have come to her rescue *en masse* and many of them have not waited to be drafted. As I saw the friendly relationship — the human bond — between these husky Indian lads and their Anglo-Saxon officers, I felt that the reason why England is the biggest colonizing nation and the most successful is because she has made herself stand in her far off possessions for equity, ethics, and a fair standard of morals. Those are things even half breeds can comprehend, and they have answered the call and come to do their bit, for a country and a master whom they have learned to trust!

What a contrast to the German colonies in Africa, who flatly refused to lift a finger for the sake of that "Vaterland" and "Kultur" of which we hear so much!

Paris, October 1st, 1917.

The A. F. F. W. has at last been absorbed by the Red Cross and as this will bring many changes in its wake, I don't believe I shall be needed much longer. For a long while the Y. M. C. A. people have been trying to persuade me

to go over to them as a full-time worker and as the Alcazar is being entirely reorganized and all the packing will probably be done outside of Paris, it seems an auspicious time to make the change.

You ask if my French is improving. I think it is a bit, although it's so hard to get any chance to talk. The entire French people are keen to practice their English on you: the shopkeepers simply refuse to converse in French.

Paris, October 9th, 1917.

We have moved our canteen indoors now, the winter rains having already set in and are established inside the beautiful Y Headquarters building, which in former days was the home of one of the Napoleons. There is a huge kitchen lined with gorgeous metal pots and pans in which we cook our wares and a fine big room for the canteen itself. It is of course much warmer and cozier and the boys flock in even larger numbers than when we were outside. I think I told you that all the canteen girls wear cherry colored aprons and white caps with black velvet streamers. It gives a splash of color to the room and the boys love anything that suggests a feminine touch.

When I go into the Y. M. C. A. entirely, I shall have to blossom forth in a regular uniform. They are very good looking, perfectly plain gray suits with Alice-blue collar and the red triangle

on the sleeve, small blue waterproof hats with the triangle on the front of the crown and heavy army cape to go over it all, with " U. S." on the collar.

Paris, October 17th, 1917.

The week has sped by and I haven't had a moment, and to add to this we have been having a few days of splendid crisp, sunny weather and it has spurred me on to work my hardest. Also, it seems as though during the past week every man I know has turned up in Paris and all of the crowd who have been here right along, having received their commissions, are leaving for parts unknown at once. This has necessitated many farewell parties of course and I have had a great time wedging them in after work.

It gives me a strange feeling — this saying good-by, over here, and if I were to allow myself to think about the danger and the uncertainty of ever seeing any of these lads again, I think I'd have nervous prostration. Here are four of my best friends leaving for the Front within the next few days, two in aviation and two in artillery, and yet one is as matter-of-fact about it as though they were off to a Sunday school picnic!

Billy Tailer has at last finished his perilous training for the Lafayette Escadrille and looks too adorable for words in his sky-blue uniform with silver wings. Believe me, aviation is no

joke and his face is pathetically worn and wan from his three months in the air. They never know when they are going to fly and therefore eat at any old time and any old thing. When they are training they generally have to fly at four o'clock in the morning and sometimes keep it up until eleven on a perfectly empty tummy.

The weather is decidedly cool and as the Government won't allow any heat turned on until the thermometer drops to ten degrees for three days in succession, there are times when we think we shall never be warm again.

So many sugar ships have been sunk that we are going to be cut out of sugar entirely for the month of December. It will seem a bit strange and not too pleasant as I have never craved sweet things so much as since coming over here. We are so cut down in that way that every one clamors for candy and cakes, even those who despised them heretofore.

Paris, October 19th, 1917.

I wish you could see this wonderful city tonight. We have just driven up the Champs Élysées after having "tea-ed" downtown. As we crossed the Place de la Concorde the sky was a delicate apricot melting into blue, a wonderful background for the outline of the Eiffel Tower and the bold black silhouette of the obelisk. A fragile new moon hung suspended close to the horizon — with Venus showing

bright and clear, nearer to the moon to-night than at any other time during the year (so the papers said this morning).

Paris certainly grows on one and I never get tired of looking up the most beautiful street in the world with the strong lines of the Arc de Triomphe looming up in the distance. Just now the trees on each side have turned yellow and in the morning with the sun shining they look like burnished gold.

Last night some of the Y canteen workers were asked to go down to the Hôtel Pavillion, which is the first to be taken over and run under Y. M. C. A. management for the American soldiers in Paris. A party was being given for every one in the hotel and any one else who wanted to come. When we walked in, there was a variety show going on with various professional stunts, magician, etc. I have never seen so many branches of our service represented as in that audience or so many pairs of eyes. American girls are not a common sight over here and afterwards when the dancing started we were fairly mobbed! I'm sure every one had a bully time. These parties are going to be frequent affairs from now on, I understand.

Paris, October 23rd, 1917.

I have joined the Y. M. C. A. entirely now and it is already proving a great satisfaction. It's so wonderful working for our own boys and

feeling that I am giving all my strength and energy towards that end. I have moved into a uniform, for which in many ways I am thankful. It simplifies the matter of dress and here in Paris it gives you a more dignified position if you are wearing a uniform of the organization of which you are definitely a part.

Personally, of course, the canteen work is tremendously appealing to me and perhaps in the early spring I shall go out into the "Field" (meaning one of the huts anywhere out of Paris). I've had one chance already but the plan wasn't really practical. In the meantime my job here offers ever increasing openings for help and work and I am wonderfully happy in the anticipation of such a busy, useful winter.

I have seen a good deal of John the past few days, and he is becoming quite a *habitué* of the canteen. He has left the Ambulance service, it having been taken over by the army, and is now keen to join some other and more active part of the service. He was however meekly getting ready to go home, as he had a cable from his family telling him to take his choice of the Ambulance or Medical Unit work. As he didn't favor either of these suggestions, he was going home to talk to his family and try to persuade them to let him go to an officers' training school in America. We know his family, and you can imagine how much chance he would have had! I expressed my views rather strongly concerning a

man's duty when his country was at war. I simply couldn't help saying what I did. Also it is most important for those of our men who are over to stick and enlist here, the problem of transportation being so stupendous. John has been crazy to go into the Artillery with all his friends, and to-day he came and told me he had decided to do it, family or no family. I almost embraced him on the spot! I hope I didn't influence him unduly for it's a big responsibility, but I haven't a shadow of a doubt that he will be thankful all his life, if he comes through, that he didn't trot home to Mother, like a slacker. One can't live so near the Front without turning into a rabid recruiting agent!

This week has beaten all preceding ones for work. Our canteen has been jammed to the doors, and so much to do. We cannot seem to prepare enough food for these famishing hordes, and are eaten out of house and home every day no matter how much we have on hand. I literally don't sit down once from two until nine, and my hands are a perfect sight and feel like sandpaper from dish water, etc. However, I seem to thrive on it all and it is wonderful to be busy.

Paris, November 15th, 1917.

You may be surprised to hear that I am not going to wait until the spring to go out into the "Field" but am going now. You see, I heard in an indirect way that the Y was put to it to find

women for the huts they are erecting in the various camps, as so many people wanted to stay in Paris for the winter, there being more coal here, etc. Secretly, I have been dying to go out into the Field before this and would have gone before now if it hadn't been that every one threw cold water on my little scheme and insisted that the Y would never consider sending a lady of twenty-two summers into an army camp. So I sat on my ambitions and decided I must be patient and count my mercies, which were certainly many. Then I heard these rumors about a shortage of women in the field and, taking my courage firmly in both hands, I pranced into the office of our head boss and offered my services. She looked me over for several of the longest moments I have ever known and then asked me if I knew of what field work consisted and if I had considered the hardships thereof! I said I was crazy to make a stab at it and thought I could stand the hardships. She then remarked that I looked young but I told her that I was very old in experience, at which she looked amused, thereby infuriating me. Why is it one is always so proud of what one thinks is worldly experience? At any rate, she put my name down and said in a few days I should know my fate and she did look as though I might do, so much so, in fact, that I beamed all over my face and was strongly tempted to kiss her, which wouldn't have done at all. However,

I controlled myself and made what I hope was a very dignified exit.

Last night the Canteen gave a party for the survivors of the "Alcedo." You remember it was torpedoed and went down about ten days ago. We tried to cheer them with music, a little dancing and lots of good food and after a while some of them lost their strained expression and really seemed to enjoy themselves. At any rate, they all chanted the same refrain: "Gee, it certainly is swell to see a girl that talks American and not English." Most of them wanted to talk about their experiences and such gruesome and horrible tales you never heard. They had been on the boat that came to the rescue of the "Antilles" and the "Finland" and during their short career over on this side, before they were hit themselves, they had picked up some three hundred Americans floating about.

When their own horrible adventure came, they had exactly four minutes from the time the torpedo struck until the "Alcedo" disappeared under the water. Most of them saw the U Boat plainly and spoke with the Germans in the conning tower, who asked the tonnage and size of the boat they had sunk. Our boys lied valiantly, giving wrong figures, which they said saved their lives as the Boches put them down as a merchant vessel and so failed to shoot them in their life boats, in the usual way. The torpedo struck

right where some of the boys were sleeping and they never woke again. Twenty-one went down on the boat.

Paris, November 17th, 1917.

This morning I received my marching orders and I am that thrilled and excited I can scarcely contain myself. Where do you suppose they are sending me? To the port where I landed. I guess you will know where that is without my mentioning any names. It is to be one of the largest encampments in France and the Y. M. C. A. is building eight huts in and about the town, so you can see how much work there is to be done. Of course I should have preferred in a way to get a bit nearer the fighting line but I do feel that for the winter months it's going to be quite ideal and probably in the Spring we shall have our chance to go out and rough it if we want to.

There are thousands of our men to do for down there and more coming all the time. It's also the port where most of the mammoth supplies for our army come in, and, taken all in all, I know it's going to be interesting beyond words. I am sure you will approve and feel that I have done right in grasping this wonderful opportunity. It certainly isn't a time to sit back.

To-morrow I finish up at the Canteen, then have three days in which to pack and get ready. Thursday will see me on my way rejoicing al-

though sorry to leave my little canteen here and all the people who have been so kind. The sound of Bordeaux grows more and more attractive and my enthusiasm is growing in proportion. It is wonderful to be told how much you are needed. To-night I could fairly purr with contentment.

CHAPTER III

BORDEAUX

En Route from Paris for Bordeaux,
November 21st, 1917.

I am in a compartment otherwise completely filled with French officers, and maintaining a most dignified bearing in my little corner. Most of them have offered me the morning paper, magazines, chocolates and cigarettes with all the manner in the world, but I thought it wiser to refuse!

You should have seen me yesterday winding up my affairs at the bank and at the hotel, and this morning leaving, with my little trunk and suit case piled on the front of a taxi and the entire staff of the servants at the "Vernet" to see me off. I did feel pretty old and independent and so important traveling *en militaire*. Incidentally that got me a reduction on my ticket to Bordeaux, a little matter of thirty-five francs reduction. So you see, in more ways than one, it pays to be a soldier.

It has been a wonderful trip so far, the country lovely in spite of sheets of rain and no leaves on the trees. The darkness is falling now and one gets glimpses, as the train rushes past, of long sweeps of meadowland, with everywhere the

stately poplars, "exclamation points" of gray against a leaden sky. I can hardly wait to get there and see where I'm going to be put. I can't get over the feeling of exhilaration at the thought of finding a real niche in this huge machine of war.

Bordeaux, November 21st, 1917.

Well you see we arrived safely, although in a tempest of rain. The station was jammed with soldiers of all nationalities and I had quite a time collaring a porter, finding my trunks and hustling myself and baggage into a cab. The Hôtel de France, for which I made tracks, was full to overflowing, but luckily the proprietor remembered me and gave me a magnificent apartment, which looked very large and barn-like. I could hardly see the ceiling, and the furniture, although enormous, looked sort of lost in the vast area. I caught sight of myself in a huge mirror and positively I looked about the size of a fly. At any rate, I had a bully dinner and was soon afterwards sound asleep in my high bedstead. Miss M—— and P—— have been too kind for words; showered me with attentions and delightful books, so I have been quite the spoiled baby.

Bordeaux, November 27th, 1917.

Well, my first day's work at Bordeaux has been most satisfactory and how good it seems to be back in harness again. The Y has taken over a huge building facing on the central *Place* and

the Y. M. C. A. letters painted on the front can be seen many blocks away. The work here is very similar to that in Paris, only on a much larger scale. We serve the men with tea, coffee, cakes, ice cream, etc., and in between times go in and talk and sing with them or play games. This is the nucleus for all the surrounding camps and is packed with men on a few hours' leave. There are engineers, aviators, regulars, middies, and every other kind of U. S. soldiers and sailors you can imagine. I am hoping they will send me out to one of the huts in an outside camp. It would be intensely interesting to be close to a real encampment, and see the colossal things they are doing. Our engineers are remaking France. The French people stand about watching with their mouths wide open.

To-morrow is Thanksgiving. It seems strange with you all so far away. We shall be very busy as we are having a party for all the boys.

Bordeaux, November 28th, 1917.
(Thanksgiving Day.)

We've had a full day — a little service at 8:30 this morning and I have just this moment come in from the Canteen and it is after eleven P. M. We went out to the dedication of one of the large huts in the Marine Camp and it was marvelous and inspiring. I am hoping that they are going to send one of the older women and me out to run the Canteen there. The country is heavenly and

the work engrossing and inspiring. To-night we had a big party at the Y Headquarters here. The boys had a royal time.

I must to bed now. God bless and keep you always.

Base 2, U. S. A. P. O. 705, Lormont,
December 15th, 1917.

I think I wrote you that I was hoping to be assigned to the Marine Camp, and here I am for a little while at least. Miss M——, a very agreeable older woman, two Y men, and I have charge of the big new hut which has been built for the use of the 5th and 6th Marines. This is my first experience with this branch of the service and I must admit that I am tremendously impressed. They have to stand a lot of guying just now as there are rumors that parts of the 1st Division have already gone into the lines in a French sector. The marine motto has always been "First in the Fight" and it galls them terribly to be held back. There is a big contingent of them in Bordeaux on M. P. (Military Police) duty; another cause for jeers from the other branches of the service! I heard an old regular infantry man the other day call out to a marine: "You're good for nothin' but the police force, that's why Pershing keeps you out of the trenches."

Of course a violent row ensued in which I'm glad to say the marine carried off the laurels. Later, when he came into the canteen, I asked

him about it and he said: "Girlie, we're just biding our time and ain't sayin' much but if they ever let us up to those trenches, we'll show them that there ain't a speck of yellow in the whole Marine Corps!" They're a fine looking bunch, well set up and always spotlessly clean. I thoroughly enjoy working for them and have grown very fond of a dozen or so of the boys already.

Our hut is made in the usual way; half of the rough hall is used for reading and writing and the other for entertainments, with a diminutive stage built at the end. The canteen runs the entire length of one end of the building and looks very much like a grocery store with its broad counter and wares stacked in exhibition piles at the back. The canteen is my domain and the place where I spend practically all my waking hours. The electricity hasn't been put in as yet so we use lamps of acetylene gas which help to light things up at night but which are a bit overpowering at times, the smell being pretty bad.

Just now the weather is bitter cold and, being so near the river, there are dense fogs at night which creep up between the cracks of our roughly built floor and somehow seem to get into my very bones. When I have been on duty for three or four hours, I lose all feeling from the waist down. It's very difficult to thaw out as our billet is like a refrigerator and in the wing of an old château that hasn't been opened for three years. At night, when I go to bed, I pile everything I own

in the line of clothing on top of me and clutch my hot water bag, "old faithful," firmly, wishing that I had about a dozen just like it. However, it doesn't keep its warmth very long. I heat the water on my wee alcohol lamp and then slip the bag between the icy sheets. The other night, I was about ten minutes in getting to bed and it didn't take more than that for the heat to disappear entirely, and, in twenty minutes, the bag was like ice.

The mud in camp is ankle-deep and cakes about one's shoes an inch thick, forming a freezing mold or jacket for each foot!

We eat our meals in the little room back of the canteen, with the two soldier details that help us in our work. The food is regular army stuff and is brought across from the big mess kitchen in a tin pail. As it is quite a distance and the weather fearfully cold, our "slum" (stew) and coffee are generally only luke warm by the time they arrive. However, of course nobody kicks and I am so intensely grateful to be here that I would put up with much worse conditions for the sake of being just where I am.

The boys are a wonderful lot. They train from sunrise to sunset in this horrible mud, but night sees them piling into the hut by the hundreds. There are always groups of intense, eager faces to be seen around the dozen or so stoves discussing anything and everything. A lot of them crowd about the long tables writing letters home

and playing games, and a few are always hanging over the counter laughing and talking. It is pathetic how eager they are for a word with some woman who speaks their own lingo and I wish the day were three times as long and I had a dozen pairs of hands. You can't conceive how busy we are and how much, much remains undone in spite of it.

Of course I don't know much about soldiers as yet but I can't help but feel that the marines must be above the average. I can scarcely wait for them to get their chance in the trenches. I'm sure they will show up splendidly.

Bordeaux, December 24th, 1917.

My joy was short-lived because here I am back at Headquarters in Bordeaux. They had to send the girl who was here to a place where there was a big new hut and no one to run it, and as they were swamped with men here on leave, they sent a hurry call out to Lormont and so I am back on my old job and working from nine A. M. to eleven P. M. At last I know the meaning of that phrase "the Christmas rush." I was disappointed to leave my marines, of course, but I can't help feeling that I am needed here and we hope to make this first Christmas away from home as easy for these poor lads as possible. Mrs. Astor and Miss Harriman are opening up their big new restaurant on the ground floor to-morrow and there is to be a Christmas tree with presents for every one.

THE "Y" AT BORDEAUX

The most wonderful thing happened yesterday. Aunt T. and Uncle J. suddenly appeared out of a clear sky to spend Christmas with me. I have never been so surprised or pleased, and laughed and cried all in one moment. Such hugging and carrying on you never did see. I was trying my best not to get homesick or mind being away from you all, so far, but I'm afraid I was a bit lonesome. And now Aunt T. has come and I'm quite the happiest young person you ever saw. It's an awfully busy time of course but I think I shall be able to get off and have some meals with her, and just to know that some one who belongs to you is within seeing distance makes all the difference.

You may be sure that I am thinking of you all at home and of the years and years of Christmas eves that stretch into the past. I know you are busy trimming the house with holly wreaths and mistletoe and there is a feeling of mystery and wonder in the air. I can see the guest room piled high with gifts of all shapes and sizes and downstairs an expectant row of stockings hanging before the library fire. How I should love to peek in on you all to-night and yet I know you are as thankful as I am that I am right where I am and at least trying to do my tiny bit to help over here. May we all be together before another year has rolled around!

One can't help thinking of the hundreds of thousand allied soldiers spending their Christmas

eve in the trenches and of course especially our own lads who are beginning to get their taste of war.

I remember Uncle S. telling me about the Russian Front just at this season a year ago. The Russians from their side heard the Germans singing the familiar " Stille Nacht " and other Christmas carols and gathered that the Boches were celebrating and would not be in a mood for fighting. The Russians therefore stopped all operations and gave themselves up to the night that generally means " peace and good will." At about two o'clock, the Germans realized that all was silent over the enemy lines and at once launched a mammoth attack which caught the Russians unawares and Christmas morning dawned on a wholesale massacre and slaughter, until the Bzura river was red with blood and a mass of bodies floating down the stream.

Later.

I managed to get out for a few moments just before dinner and slipped up to Tante's room in the hotel with a lot of foolish little gifts and a huge bunch of holly that I had purchased and spread them on her trunk with a steamer blanket over it and a wreath of holly all around. It looked quite sweet and I did feel so Christmasy while I was doing it.

I have just now come home and the bells are ringing all over the city so I know it is midnight.

It seemed stranger than ever to-night walking down my cobble-stoned street with the quaint, picturesque roofs outlined against the sky. Such a change from last year to this war-like France. The streets full of soldiers and I, myself, in a uniform! What a world it is!

Bordeaux, December 27th, 1917.

Such crowded busy hours as we have put in during the last few days. However, there will be a bit of a breathing spell now, as there are to be fewer men in on leave until New Year's. This afternoon Aunt T. is coming to see my hideous little room. I have built a fire that is much too large for my diminutive fire-place, and we are to have tea and cake! So you see it is to be a regular house warming.

I don't know whether I have written you about my sleeping apartment before. At any rate, it is on the top floor of a tall thin house. It was the only place I could get and so I have thought it wiser to laugh at its disadvantages. There is no coal, and wood costs six francs for eight pieces so one just goes without except on special occasions like to-day. I generally get in from the canteen about 11:30 P. M. and then my four flights seem a bit of a climb, but it is nice to have a little spot of your own and I'm always so glad to get to the top of the stairs. I still have struggles with my hot water bag, for I can always see my breath in the room and I think "old faithful" has gotten

a bit discouraged and doesn't think it worth while to keep warm in this damp penetrating clime.

The room is papered in a mud-colored tone of gold, beetle-shaped figures scattered over it at intervals of two inches! I have a black iron bedstead and a fire-place and mantelpiece made of the black and white mottled marble that is used for tombstones! There are two windows, but unfortunately one can't look out as they are made of red and navy blue stained glass. However, I am very fond of my little room and to-day it wears a gay and festive look in anticipation of my party. I have put all my photographs out and we are going to have a fine cozy time I know.

Bordeaux, January 7th, 1918.

I don't know whether I shall put in a bid for the Front when Spring comes or not. I think there is a chance that I'd get my opportunity to go as the Y is giving the best places to those who have been in the service longest and had some little experience. Of course, there is always my age to stand in the way and make me wish I were a hundred and fifty with snow-white hair! Also they don't let women go very close to the trenches and are getting more and more strict about it. Here, I am working in rapidly and get more responsibility each day. It's hard to know just where the need is the greatest.

I have just been given almost complete charge of our tea room at the Hut as every one else hates

housekeeping and accounts. I pay the bills, order all the food, keep the books and look after the maids, all *en français* and, take it from Mani, it's some job! The boys consume over two thousand a week of the special cakes that we have made of American flour, and drink literally gallons of chocolate. You know the French temperament and love it as I do, but you can imagine that a large per cent. of our supplies go into the capacious mouths and pockets of our servants, unless I stand guard all the time.

We have numerous French ladies of the "first Bordeaux families" who come to help us certain afternoons a week, and incidentally to pick up the latest gossip and perfect their rather halting English. Eager French mothers bring their awkward young daughters to meet the flower of American manhood, and the F. of A. M. turn and flee for their lives when they see them, preferring greatly the chic, pretty little shop girls with which Bordeaux is filled! The reason we have these "first" excellent females is "to cement the feeling of brotherhood between France and America," and it is my delightful job to welcome the French mademoiselles and keep them working; a thing this class of girls have never in their lives done, up to date.

Bordeaux, January 27th, 1918.

Miss Ely, our chief in Paris and the director of all the women Y workers in France, came down

yesterday on a tour of inspection and to have a look at this busy section. She is a wonder and has always been fine to me. This time she was especially nice and seemed to approve of the little I have been able to do in my two months here. I told her I should like to stay on for the present and then go nearer the Front in the Spring. From what she said, I think I shall get my opportunity. In a few months we ought to have our big place here in splendid shape and then I should love the experience of helping out with the men straight from the trenches. Luckily, we had word that Miss Ely was coming, so our building looked especially clean and in apple pie order! Also, all the women put on every detail of the regulation uniform, some of which is generally discarded, and altogether made the desired impression.

It's very hard not to worry about the various lads I know at the Front. No word from Ted in weeks, which means that he has gone into the line with his Division, as he had expected. Some one brings in a new rumor each day and I don't see how any one is to come out alive. It makes me so heartsick sometimes that it's difficult to keep smiling and put my mind on my work. Billy Tailer is, I know, flying at the Front now. One of his latest letters dated in December said: "War is looming up pretty big for little me. I will be regular bait for the Germans any day

now. If I do happen to get it, wounded or otherwise, I won't forget our many good times together. You certainly aided my existence over here a thousand fold. I am flying a 150 H. P. 'Spad.' They are fine machines and terrifically fast, things just fade away when you are near the ground." Billy is such a winsome sort of person and one of the most lovable and unselfish boys I know. He is always talking about his family and especially of his mother in whom he is entirely wrapped up. I wish we had more like him. I remember the luncheons we had in Paris,—occasionally he brought along some friend from the Escadrille and they talked casually about how they would arrange to have me told when they were killed! And it isn't that Bill is a morbid type and wants to die. I have never seen any one who got more sheer enjoyment out of everyday life. He simply has the most wonderful capacity for complete self-sacrifice and his duty and what it may entail is so utterly apparent that it never occurs to him that he could follow another course.

Bordeaux, February 5th, 1918.

Yesterday I received a letter from the Y. M. C. A. Headquarters informing me that I had been transferred to another post and to report to Paris at once. I can't tell you the name of the place I am going to but I suppose it is the most im-

portant proposition that the Y has tackled so far and the one place in which every one is crazy to be stationed.

You see, General Pershing isn't granting any "leaves" to the big cities, so they have picked out one small town ideally situated, and the men are all ordered to spend their eight day "permission" there. General Pershing has turned over the entire organization of this big "leave camp" to the Y and they are picking people from all their different districts to go and get it started. and then to stay and run it. For some unknown and extraordinary reason, I've been asked to go, the only one from this Base, and I am simply overcome. I presume my place here was the one which could be most easily filled and then, I am young and they want all the girls they can get to cheer up the boys and make up to them for not going to Paris.

It is vitally important that when the men come out of the trenches they shouldn't relax morally during their "leave" and take to drinking, etc. After all the frightfulness that they have gone through it isn't strange that a bit of civilized life and liberty should go to their heads and it is the time to insert good influence instead of bad. Most of the men who will come on leave have been in the lines since November without ever having had the sight of a woman. They have not even seen an undevastated town.

I do think we have our work cut out for us as

they will be disappointed when they find that they can't go where they like. However, it's going to be mighty interesting, I fancy. I feel that the work I have been doing is important, but if possible, the kind I am about to try is more so, and I am grateful for the extraordinary opportunity.

P. S., 11:30 P. M.

The news has just come in of the sinking of an American transport. Two hundred and fifty men lost!

It's this kind of thing that makes the boys grit their teeth, and the Germans will certainly get what is coming to them now. Think of all those lives lost before they had even had their chance to strike back. It makes one boil with rage.

CHAPTER IV

AIX-LES-BAINS

Paris, February 9th, 1981.

Here I am after a very comfortable trip, but the joy of seeing Paris again has been completely overshadowed by the news in this morning's *Herald.* Billy Tailer, the best of friends and the most splendid of men, has been killed, while flying over the German lines. I always knew in a vague way that I'd be terribly cut up if anything happened to him, but I never knew it would be like this. Somehow I feel ten years older and the war has become a more hideous reality than ever. I could kill any Boche who crossed my path to-night. Every street corner of this city reminds me of Bill, and the whole place seems alive with memories of his radiant, boyish face; for he was nothing but a boy in years and yet with the mature soul and character of a man. I shall miss Billy more than I can realize now. He is the first of my friends to "go West" and perhaps that makes it harder. One can't help feeling proud of any one who died in so glorious a way for his country, but it seems so infinitely sad and when the world needs Bill's kind so badly. There was a beautiful tribute to him in the

Herald and a picture. It seems he was killed while trying to avenge the death of one of his friends. It was so entirely characteristic; he was the most valiant of friends. It was a very desperate but unequal fight in the air and finally Billy's machine crashed to the ground. This has been a fearful shock to me. One minute Bill is here and alive, smiling. The next, gone — without a sign.

Paris, February 12th, 1918.

A wonderful Spring day, and Paris a dream of loveliness. The streets are gay with color and the flower carts piled high with exquisite sprays of mimosa and huge bunches of deep purple violets; it is all one can do not to buy an armful. I have been tearing around all day getting orders for my new post, tickets, "movement order" stamped, etc. We don't leave until to-morrow and there are to be fifteen Y women on my train, so I shall be well chaperoned!

I have been trying to keep very busy so as not to think about Billy too much. This new job is one in which cheer and a smiling appearance count for everything, and I am trying hard to get in the proper mood.

Aix-les-Bains, February 14th, 1918.

Well, it was a great trip down. I found in my compartment two other Y. M. C. A.'ers of a youngish age. They had just arrived from the

States and this was their first post. We talked for about an hour blessing our stars that we had the whole compartment to ourselves, to stretch out in a bit. We had put out the light and each curled up in her cape when the door was yanked open and a large, blue-clad French officer thrust himself into our midst. Poor soul, he certainly had a night of it, as both windows were open, and you doubtless know the French opinion of "poisonous night air." He had just settled himself and was slumbering sweetly when Miss O'Connor's huge, heavy roll came smashing down upon his head. I guess he ended up by longing for the peace of the trenches!

I find that every one else is writing home the name of the place where "we are at," so I certainly am going to. We are at Aix-les-Bains, and I guess you will agree that it is an ideal place for a leave-camp. Of course, never having been in this part of France before, it is all delightfully new and beautiful beyond words. The last few hours in the train were wonderful, we were climbing up, up, with a gorgeous sunrise glorifying the tops of the Alps.

The Y. M. C. A. has taken over the mammoth Casino, which is the most splendid affair of its kind I've ever seen; all marble pillars and wonderful frescoes and shiny hard-wood floors. The terrace takes up one entire side and is generally flooded with sunshine. It looks right out upon a magnificent stretch of snow-capped mountains.

We have a life-sized theater for Mr. E. H. Sothern and other lights to perform in, and a huge assembly room for movies. The ball room is going to be filled with booths where candy, cigarettes, etc., are sold, and the enormous bar has been turned into the canteen! It is of solid marble and the "grandest" thing you ever saw. We are making a library out of a large reading and writing room, fitted up with easy chairs, and glassed in on all sides. The sun just pours in and, so far, there has been plenty of sun.

The old gambling rooms are being turned into billiard and pool rooms, and it is whispered that a man from Huyler's is on the way over to run the first real live American soda fountain that has arrived. We expect the first four hundred and fifty men to-morrow, and the same number arrive every day from now on. They have a full week here and will keep coming and going. In this way, we shall be taking care of about three thousand men each week.

All the Y women workers are living together in two apartments in a sort of family hotel. There are about fifteen of us so far and I was delighted to find that Mrs. Margaret Deland is one of the fifteen! Most of the women range all the way from thirty to fifty, but they are an extremely nice lot and we all work together mighty well. I am rooming with Miss O'Connor, a very keen, intelligent girl, who is one of the librarians in the New York City Public Library. We get

along beautifully, have a fine big room with a balcony and a view that takes your breath away.

The food is excellent and we all eat together at a big, long table and have a very jolly time. I cannot get over how lucky I am to be here and from every standpoint it is great. The climate and air are splendid, and, of course, the experience is invaluable. We shall meet, in time, every man who is serving in France!

To-morrow morning, bright and early, we meet the troop train, so I must to bed. The boys will need extra cheering after the perfectly frightful news from Russia. We hope we can make them forget things and just enjoy themselves for the week that they're here.

I've spent the day in the cellar of the Casino, scrubbing shelves with soap and water and storing supplies for the Canteen. Everything is ready now and looks lovely.

Aix-les-Bains, February 17th, 1918.

The days since I wrote last have been so full of preparation for the coming of all these boys that I haven't had a moment to myself.

We expected them a day before they arrived and the whole population of the town had been practically camping out at the railroad station. General Alaire came down to open up the leave camp formally and E. H. Sothern and Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Ames to run the beginning enter-

tainments. We all waited around with great impatience until the wire came that the boys were actually on the way.

James Europe's famous orchestra (New York City) which is now attached to the 15th Infantry is going to be here three weeks. Twenty-eight darkies, with Mr. Europe himself in the lead, arrayed in shoulder straps and the silver bars of a First Lieutenant! They are perfectly screaming but a marvelous band and when they came marching down the street to meet the troops yesterday, the French people went perfectly wild over them.

Just before the troop train pulled in, a lot of my Bordeaux Naval Aviation boys came through on their way to a final training camp. They had several moments to wait, so piled off to see if I was down at the station to meet the troops. Of course I was, and it was wonderful seeing some old friends. They've all gotten their commissions since sailor-suit days in Bordeaux and look stunning in their new uniforms.

After their train had left, the troop train pulled in and in all my life I never expect to be so thrilled again. After almost a week without work and without Sammies, I could have cried, I was so glad to see the familiar khaki. Also, the boys were just as they had come out of the trenches a day before, muddy boots and heavy packs, steel helmets and all. The first lot I've

seen straight from the Front and I never was prouder that I was an American. There are no other men in the world like them.

Aix turned itself inside out to receive them. The Mayor, arrayed in a tall silk hat and long-tailed coat, made a beautiful speech! The village band played the Star Spangled Banner, and the Boy Scouts marched in the parade. Of course there were thousands of cameras snapping pictures, and movies are coming out soon. You must be on the lookout for them, and for me standing near the center holding a big American flag, and looking thrilled to the core!

I never have seen a more beautiful sight than those splendid boys marching from the station with the glorious mountains looming up in the background against a cloudless blue sky. They are all such dears, so thrilled at being on leave and so delightfully pleased with everything and everybody.

We had the most wonderful show in the theater last night for them, representatives from many theaters in London and Paris and ending up with Sothern himself who was fine, of course. Altogether a most successful beginning.

Aix, February 19th, 1918.

Day before yesterday, much to my relief, I got a long delayed letter from Ted A. and yesterday with a new bunch of boys that came in were twenty men from his particular battery in the

artillery. They knew "Lieutenant A." well and had seen him three days before. They will take a letter directly to him when they return to the trenches, which makes it very nice as the regular Postal Service takes a month or more. Since Bill's death, I have naturally become more anxious about all my friends "out there."

Mother, you would be quite pleased with me if you could see me now. I have on four shirts, underdrawers, woolen stockings, knitted knee protectors and two sweaters. I am about as broad as I am long, but none of us seem to be able to keep the intense cold out. We are pretty high up in the mountains and the huge Casino in which I work from two P. M. to midnight isn't heated at all, and you can imagine it is exactly like a tomb. Luckily, here in the Pension, we have a beautifully sunshiny room and a stove in the hall, so we get thawed out once a day and manage to survive.

My job consists in being interpreter for any one who needs me, and serving hot drinks, sandwiches and hot dishes (of sausages, potato, macaroni, etc.) over the top of the beautiful marble counter to hundreds and hundreds of ravenous doughboys. The boys are full of the most amazing tales and I haven't had such an interesting time since I came to France. They're none of them very sanguine about a speedy finish of the war, alas.

Aix, Washington's Birthday, 1918.

Yesterday I had an afternoon off and motored over with Mrs. Roosevelt to Chambéry where the Y has just opened up its second leave camp. It is only about ten miles away and not nearly as large as this; only accommodating three hundred instead of three thousand. The country between here and there is ravishing, the Alps and the sun on the snow, so beautiful it makes you ache.

I spent the afternoon in the Chambéry Y. M. C. A. Headquarters, talking and singing with the men. It is very attractive over there. The fact of there being fewer makes it much more homey and at four o'clock the boys all come in and have chocolate in front of blazing fires which they have in all the rooms. The building was a club before the war, and adapts itself very well to this sort of thing. Mrs. Roosevelt has been working like a horse to get it in shape and as she has beautiful taste, it looks lovely. The reading rooms are gay with chintz, and big bowls of violets and mimosa on the mantelpieces.

Last night at the Casino we had what was called "Stunt Night." Every one who could act, sing, dance, etc., got up and did it, and it was very amusing. I do believe a crowd of "regulars" are the most pitiless of judges. One poor, little Jew got up and thought he could sing, but scores of scornful voices at once informed him that he was mistaken, and the poor soul was

dragged off the stage by main force and the aid of a hook (a long cane)!

Mrs. Roosevelt has gone up to Paris to get ten more workers for Aix alone. We have much too few to swing things properly and have worked like dogs the past week. Personally, I am used to it, but some of the other women are new to the job and look like wrecks.

We have abundant and delicious food at our Pension. One hears so much about food shortage but Savoy is so rich in products of all kinds that, so far, we haven't lacked for a thing and I am growing disgracefully fat.

I'm so sorry that my letters haven't been getting over. The censor must have been holding them. I wonder if I've been saying too much. It's so hard not to tell all you know, otherwise I should just have to send the usual "well and happy" and let it go at that.

The extreme cold has broken and Miss O'Connor and I are bundled up and writing in the sun on our wee balcony. It is quite glorious and the world a very beautiful place this morning. I wish you could enjoy our view. The clouds are just drifting off of the tops of the mountains, and the atmosphere is as clear as crystal, so that one can pick out each individual fir tree, black against the side of the lower Alps.

Now to work. You don't know with what satisfaction I say that.

Aix-les-Bains, February 27th, 1918.

The papers are certainly discouraging reading now, and the facts that don't get printed make one sick. Great things are brewing up the line and the trainload of boys that leave here every day to go back, carry the most determined lot you ever saw, although every one knows what his fate may be.

Miss O'Connor being out, I am taking this excellent opportunity of "hooking" her pen! I have been working unusually hard since I arrived here, but for reasons which under the laws of the Medes and Persians we are not allowed to write of, work has suddenly become slack,—though I don't doubt the papers at home are full of it! At any rate, being a leave-camp, we are just at present not too popular, at least not as popular as another place which, as Ed puts it, "is a few yards nearer Heaven!" After the mad whirl since opening, no one is especially upset at a bit of respite.

Yesterday I went down to the station to see one of our troop trains off. I know practically every lad in it. Several of us stood at the end of the platform and shook hands with each boy as the train moved slowly past. They were all hanging out of the windows with hands outstretched, the setting sun shining full on their eager, boyish faces, and many of them smiling bravely through a mist of tears. We waved and

waved as they pulled out and could still see a flutter of handkerchiefs and hear a faint cheer in the distance, when the train turned the bend and was lost to sight. Every one left on that platform was crying, even the officers, and I don't believe any of us will every forget it as long as we live.

They went back without one word of complaint, knowing that for most of them it would be the last journey, before that great mysterious one from which there is no returning. They were very full of gratitude for the little we have been able to do for them here. One boy said to me: "Girlie, it will seem just like a dream, when we get back there." One can't help but hope that whatever seemed to them beautiful in this short "dream" will stand by to make life, and even death, easier "out there."

That hope, and the power to pack their brief "leave" full of the memory of home influences and of home joys, makes this leave-camp work, to my mind, the most important kind that is being done, outside of the trenches. The strain emotionally and physically is greater than anything which I have so far taken up, but I am sure that I have the strength and that I shall find all that I lack in the way of brawn. Surely when it is for so important a cause, the strength will not be lacking. So far I feel very well, and in all my life I have never looked so strong.

Aix-les-Bains, February 28th, 1918.

Mrs. Deland feels as most every one over here does, that our generation has seen happier times than we ever will see again, that we are on the verge of a new era in the history of the world, in which the old order of things will be entirely changed, and there will be all kinds of revolutions and wars between capital and labor, etc. I get quite discouraged when I hear all these intellectual guys talking about it and realize how very little I know concerning the big forces in our country and what part they will play in this war for democracy. I am trying hard to learn things, to read when I get a minute's time and listen, with ears flapping during meal times, but it is hard to keep up with everything when one hasn't even time to look at a paper. Of course, my time, my interest, everything I have to give, centers round the boys, and it is rather awful how (with the exception of my family) nothing else makes a whoop of difference. They are so interesting, so funny and above all so adorably simple that working amongst them is an ever-changing experience. At meal times we all have strings of stories to tell of the absurd things they have said or done during a single morning or afternoon. Most of the lads are very gay and care free, regular "leave-spirits." They show their serious side but seldom, except when we are down at the station waiting for the train. Then, all at once, the inner nature asserts

itself and they say things that bring a lump into your throat. I wouldn't give up experiences I have had during my two weeks here for anything in life.

Aix-les-Bains, March 2nd, 1918.

To-day we awoke to find a heavy blanket of snow over everything and it is still snowing hard. After our few brief days of springy weather it surely is a sudden change.

The boys have been coming in from their tramps in the mountains with bunches of exquisite yellow primroses, pussy willows, snow drops and all the other lovely forerunners of Spring. Our canteen shelves have looked like a flower show, and it makes one shiver to think how many of those posies are buried now under such a cold, wet blanket.

Last night Mr. and Mrs. Francis Rogers gave us a delightful evening in the Casino. You may remember my writing you that I had heard them in Paris, months ago when they first came over. Mrs. Rogers's monologues are even better now, and are really quite wonderful. Mr. Rogers's voice sounds as though he had used it a lot, and I know he has of late, but it is still beautiful. His selection of songs was quite perfect and most suitable for our boys. He sang, among other things, "I am the Master of my Fate, I am the Captain of my Soul," and it really thrilled me through and through.

I always sit where I can watch the boys' faces, and I wish some times you could be with me. The music puts them off their guard, and I see what it means when people say that their souls shine through their eyes. Some times I turn my own away; it seems a bit of a sacrilege not to, although the expressions are so beautiful I want to look and look and forget that the world can ever hold anything less lovely.

Mr. Rogers sang that marvelous thing,

> "If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
> I know whose prayers would come down to me —
> Mother o' Mine."

After all, the Mother *motif* reaches these lads when all else fails, and I wish some of the hundreds of lonely mothers at home could have seen them while Mr. Rogers was singing.

I guess I harp a great deal on the emotional end of my work. Of course, these are only rare moments in the midst of hours and days of the commonplace. There is lots of jerking and teasing, and very occasionally an unkind word or look thrown in for balance. These lads aren't saints by any means,— just natural boys, thank God, each with a spark of the Old Nick in him without which they wouldn't be one-half as lovable. But for perseverance, grit and sheer pluck, there is no nation on earth that can beat the Americans.

AT THE AIX RAILWAY STATION: SOLDIERS RETURNING TO THE TRENCHES

Aix, March 4th, 1918.

The last few days have been very slack and so we have been resting and giving parties for the remaining *permissionaires*. One can do much more homey things when there are fewer and we had a regular old-fashioned game party Saturday night, playing "going to Jerusalem" and similar infantile things, and had the most wonderful time. The boys adored it and as every one was in good spirits, there was a prodigious amount of laughter and noise. The French people think we are absolutely crazy.

One game we played was to act out the titles of books. My team drew "Trilby" and as I was the only girl, of course I had to go into a trance and sing "Alice Ben Bolt." As I had a cold in my head, the effect was not beautiful!

We had a lovely service yesterday morning in the Casino. We have all kinds of singers and musicians down here, supposed to be entertaining the boys, but for the moment there being only about a hundred boys to entertain, we are getting the benefit of all their accomplishments.

To-night, about six of us are getting up a movie, to be acted out by a few Y. M. C. A. girls and some of the boys. We had a grand time making up a scenario last night and you can imagine how I enjoyed it! It is to be a take-off on the usual movie plot. There is a rural scene between the country Lad and Lassie (I am to be the Lassie!). He goes to the city to make his fortune

at art, gets ensnared by the Siren, who has him paint her portrait, while Jealous Husband drinks quarts of whisky at home! The *Ingénue* waits in vain for letters which never come, and finally, when she is left penniless by the death of her sweet old Mother (Miss O'Connor) she follows to the wicked city and, of course, finds her David in the arms of the Siren. The *Ingénue* faints in a most graceful manner while Husband bursts in and shoots the Siren and his wife, and then draws a dagger upon the unsuspecting back of David! Of course Ruby, the *Ingénue,* came to from her swoon just in time to stay the hand of the murderer, whereupon he plunges the weapon into his own heart and falls unconscious across the body of his dead wife. After this delightfully peaceful scene there can be no other ending than the reconciliation of the country lad and lass, while in the distance is heard the familiar strain of the wedding march!

This is merely the bare outline. Of course, there are many other details, such as love scenes between parlor maid and butler, etc. It's all perfectly crazy but I do think the boys will enjoy it and so far it's been loads of fun.

I found a letter in my box the day the Marines left here, after their week of leave. The marines are always such appreciative souls for any little one is able to do for them. They are the best type of splendid, loyal men we are dealing with. What a joy it is to work with them!

I must stop now as we are about to rehearse for to-night.

Aix, March 5th, 1918.

Well, our movie was really a howling success and I guess we shall have to repeat it when there are more boys here. Every one did splendidly and even the actors themselves were so convulsed with laughter that they could scarcely go on. It was great fun as we acted in the real theater in the Casino with spot-lights and a whole army of scene shifters.

Yet it was the most "professional" thing I have done and every one is suggesting that I leave the Y. M. C. A. for the movies!

The part was the usual tiresome one which is always shoved on me, the part of sweet innocence, with curls, etc. I wore my gray *voile,* last summer's dress, and that round leghorn hat with the rosebud wreath and acted like a foolish little nut without an ounce of brains, but that's all I seem capable of doing, as I have such an expressionless countenance.

The whole thing was written, rehearsed and acted in twenty-four hours, which is going some, but it was more of a success doing it quickly that way.

Aix, March 9th, 1918.

I am sitting out on a sunny bench in a corner of the Park, waiting for our 15th Infantry col-

ored band to start playing. The benches round about are filled with expectant folk, a real conglomeration of French and Americans. The paths are crowded with *blessés,* some hopping along legless, their canes and crutches making a tap-tapping on the gravel. Others are lying on the grass, with one foot extended and rolled in countless bandages. Here and there our boys are playing with the children, which is a habit they have, and you can hear the cunning little French voices, using their meager supply of *mots Américains.*

It's a warmish day and the whole town is out enjoying it. Now the band is marching up the street with a crowd of excited small boys bringing up the rear accompanied of course by the usual swarm of mongrel pups.

These niggers play in a way that would lead the worst slacker to battle. There are about thirty of them and of course since they have been here they have been the wonder and the admiration of the townsfolk. The fact that they can make such extraordinary music insures their popularity and they have been made much of. This adulation has caused these ridiculous niggers to put on the most screaming airs and graces. I wish you could at this moment see the Major Domo puffing out his chest and waving a magnificent decorated stick!

We're all pretty sad, as some of our boys who went back from here such a short time ago have

been killed in a recent attack. It seems only yesterday that they waved us a cheery good-by and now — gone, one can't help wondering where, and I think we are all giving more thought to that mysterious "Beyond," as, slowly, one by one, those we know and love — pass on. Somehow, I can't think of Billy as dead, or in any dark, dismal place; he was too sunny and debonair while on this earth. I have a wonderful little picture of him standing beside his aëroplane. Such a perfect, stalwart figure. I was reading over his last letter yesterday, and thinking how lucky I was to have had the influence of his life even for such a short time.

I guess I didn't tell you that we have moved, and every one has taken rooms and apartments all over the village. Alice and I are established in a very nice clean house near the Casino. We liked rooming together first rate, but between us had so many things that they got hopelessly mixed and we ran into each other, when not in our respective beds! Now we each have single rooms near each other, nicely furnished, with a fine view and lots of sunshine. The whole bunch of women workers come here to the Casino for their meals and it does remind me so much of Farmington days — sitting at a long table and living on a schedule. We really have a very fine bunch of women now. There were a few undesirables at first but they shipped them back to Paris, and now we are a pretty congenial

crowd and enjoy each other and the work enormously.

The last two days I have gone off on wonderful all-day trips with the boys. Every excursion that is planned includes two or three Y. M. C. A. men and two or three women, and during the past week, work has been slack and consequently it has been part of our duties to go off and help the boys to have a good time. Quite a pleasant duty as they are all so nice and eager to have us go along. Yesterday about twenty-five went in three motors for an extraordinary ride, away up among the snows. We stopped at noon and ate a delicious luncheon at a little village inn, and then on again the whole of a glorious sunny afternoon, up and down hill, past alluring tiny villages, tucked away at the foot of the mountains. The scenery was too marvelous for any use and the boys simply couldn't get over it.

This morning we started out at nine-thirty, seventy-five of us on a picnic. We walked to the lake and from there took one of the Y motor boats and landed away down the other end for luncheon, and a look at the famous monastery, Hautecombe Abbey, which belongs to the Italian Royal family. It is a beautiful and picturesque old place. We built a fire on the side of a hill overlooking the lake and roasted hot dogs (sausages). We had the usual picnic fare and did ample justice to it. As I had rubbed a blister on my heel I was allowed to go home in an

automobile and accompany the empty coffee pots and food hampers! It was a glorious ride as we skirted the lake. I don't believe the Lord ever made such weather before as we are having now, and Spring seems at last to be on the way — the tall poplars are putting forth bewitching small leaves and everything is so beautiful. I feel as though I should burst.

Mr. and Mrs. John Craig have arrived here from the States with a real American Stock Company. They are putting on a series of New York successes and started off last night with "Baby Mine." Naturally it scored a tremendous hit, and I wish you could have seen those boys, rocking and doubling up with laughter. It was the best part of the show.

Aix-les-Bains, March 16th, 1918.

I have gotten a better idea from your recent letters of the feeling and viewpoint in the States, one gets so out of touch without the home newspapers. I am thankful that the country, as a whole, is aware of the inadequate equipment among our troops over here and that the lack of preparedness at this stage of the game is being shown up. Here we run up against it all the time. Every day I hear new stories from the boys who have been sent into the lines only half equipped and some without even overcoats, in this bitter weather! It does seem unpardonable that this first contingent of the expeditionary forces

should fall short on supplies when you are all being so heavily taxed at home.

We are still more idle than we want to be, but understand that next week the army is to begin granting leaves to the men in the S. O. S. (Service of Supplies) until more of the boys at the Front can be spared. For the moment, of course, no one from "out there" can think of anything besides holding the Germans. Ed is now, from latest reports, absolutely in the thick of it, but as cheerful and funny as ever.

Please don't let the moonlight nights frighten you on my account, we are far from either gun or airship and in quite the safest part of France. Moonlight nights you must think of me as standing on my little balcony, drinking in the beauty of these mountains. Naturally my thoughts are always up the line now, where the white nights stand for such different and horrible things, and my days seem to have grown into one long silent prayer.

Aix, April 28th, 1918.

I had a bully letter yesterday from Ed who has been sent back to General Headquarters on detached service. Of course, he is perfectly furious to be yanked out of the trenches and away from his men, but I, for one, am thankful! There are so many people to worry about that it is a blessing when those who are out of danger, let you know it.

Aix, April 30th, 1918.

Some days it seems hard to realize that there is a war raging close to us, so shut in are we by these mountains. If it weren't for the papers and the heartrending casualty lists, one might almost forget for a moment. As it is, the extraordinary peace and quiet make the Front seem in another world and I am thankful that it is so, for the boys who are here for their week of rest do get the complete change which is so necessary.

As for the girls, it is as though we were running a mammoth house party, only we entertain on schedule.

For instance, each morning we are given a list of the different things that have been planned for us to do. This is the way my schedule read to-day:

9 to 10:30	Serve at the Canteen.
10:30 to 12:00	Play tennis with three men (Names written below.)
2 to 5	Serve at the Canteen.
5 to 7	Take a walk with (Names given)
7 to 11:30	Dance.

This has been a very busy day and some are not quite as full although we're generally trotting about from one appointment to another most all the time. You have no idea how strange it is to do things like these "by order" and know that even if you don't feel like it or cordially dislike some of the men you are dated up with, you have to do it just the same and start off with a beaming

smile, to laugh, talk and joke yourself and them through three or four hours on end! Sometimes it's pretty hard although it's the best training in the world, especially for a lady with moods and who has been spoiled all her life — like me! However, if you could see how the boys adore the place and read the letters that come after they have gone, you could understand why the work is inspiring, and why we'd be willing to keep it up night and day if it would make them any happier. Lately and since the warm weather, it has been one endless round of picnics, motor trips, boating, tennis, games, dances and walks. The out-of-door world is very alluring. The leaves are all out and the meadows, brilliant patches of tiny wild flowers. My room looks like a posy shop. In a way, it seems heartless to be enjoying the Spring as intensely as I am, and yet, as my job at present is to smile and smile and keep smiling, I just naturally have to push out some of the somber and the tragic, fill up my life with flowers and the things I love, and try and make some of these lads forget that beyond those hazy blue mountains a world war is raging.

Aix, May 10th, 1918.

I've been very busy to-day learning a new dance. The weekly vaudeville troop arrived from Paris minus one number and as Mr. Carrell and I have danced on several Stunt Night programs,

they asked us to fill in for the missing number. So we are on for a week and we were so thankful that we had something that could be put right on to fill in. This little taste of stage life under such delightful auspices, is great fun. I have a dressing room all my own, No. 5, and Alice has been an angel, acts as maid and helps me change my costume between our two numbers. We are billed with the professionals all over town, "MISS BALDWIN & MR. CARRELL." It looked too absurd.

I come on right after the "trained cats" and, while waiting in the wings, dodge the "snake charmer's" serpents! She has two about twelve yards long apiece and they wriggle and glide around behind the stage and appear suddenly in the most unexpected manner! The snake charmer keeps them between times rolled up neatly in a lunch basket with a cloth drawn tightly over the top! One of the acrobats told me she doped them. Sometimes I get so interested behind the scenes that I almost forget to go on when my turn comes. These vaudeville artists are the most kind-hearted of mortals and have been so good to me and encouraged me in the nicest way the first night, telling me to "keep smiling and not be scared." One comedian has been especially good to me.— He white-washes his face and wears a green nose and a suit with huge black and white checks!

Aix, May 16th, 1918.

Now I can say that I have danced before royalty!

Last night we had a gala performance for King Albert of Belgium's sister, the Duchess of Vendôme. She sat in the royal box, with her young daughter and several ladies-in-waiting.

After the theater we had the pleasure of meeting her and she was most gracious and kind. They all stayed to watch the usual dancing and games and laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks. You see, it is a rather amusing sight to watch grown-up men and women playing kindergarten games and getting as excited as though they were watching a bull fight. Every one is cheering and jumping up and down and it *is* funny.

The dancing is almost as humorous. We have only twenty girls and there are always two thousand or more men! Every time the whistle blows they can "cut in." The consequence is that a girl is literally hurled from one man to another while dozens of eager hands try and snatch her away from him. Of course it is all pretty rough and one comes out of it every night with black and blue spots, but how the boys enjoy it! Poor dears, the hob-nailed boots were never designed for dancing pumps and the soles are so thick that they can step on my feet and never know it at all! The other night after five minutes of acute agony I said to the boy I was

dancing with: "Would you just as soon dance on your own feet for a while?" He laughed so loud you could hear him all over the room, and good-naturedly did as I suggested. In spite of our little trials it is the most wonderful experience you can possibly imagine, and I never get over my luck in being here.

Yesterday the biggest of the Y boats made her maiden voyage on the Lac de Bourget, carrying all the Y girls and about three hundred soldiers. We had luncheon on board and early in the afternoon landed at the end of the lake for a game of baseball. It was a cloudless day and we all had a ripping time. Walking home with about fifty young gentlemen, we passed one of the famous Paris hat shops (or a branch thereof). I say we passed it, but we didn't for we entered *en masse* and I bought me a coral pink floppy garden hat! I've never worn such a color in my life but I am so tired of gray and blue uniforms that I could buy a flame colored traveling suit! I wear this very giddy *chapeau* when off duty and fairly revel in it!

It's been a gorgeous warm Sunday and a busy one. This P. M. we gave the first of a series of Sunday teas. We had every imaginable thing to eat and drink, served on the big terrace of the Y Casino. The orchestra played at one end and the leave-men were there in full force, all beaming and enjoying themselves. I've had a very crowded week and two young gentlemen to

manage who, not having seen "an honest-to-God American girl" or anything like the U. S. A. for nine months, promptly decided, on arriving here that I was the "one and only" lady for them! I had an awful time keeping them apart as they disliked each other cordially! On the one occasion when they met in my presence, one of them generously offered to "spread the map" of the other; which, being interpreted, means either complete or partial disfigurement to one and sometimes both parties concerned!

I explained carefully, each day of the eight they spent here, that "it would all come out in the wash" and that there were scores of deserving females at home, far superior to me. However, the deserving f's are three thousand miles away, so I was put to it! To-day they left, each swearing undying devotion and fidelity, and although they were nice boys, I find myself drawing a long sigh of relief!

Aix-les-Bains, June 7th, 1918.

I've had a flying trip up to Paris since I wrote last, and had my first experience with Big Bertha. The weather was very hot and sultry while I was there and each evening the sun went down in a blaze of glory leaving a broad splash of blood red in the sky. The whole atmosphere felt electric and decidedly menacing. Of all the fiendish tools and methods the Boches have tried, I think Bertha is the cleverest and the most under-

mining to morale. She runs as regularly as a clock. Every twenty minutes a shell lands in some part of Paris and spreads death and destruction all about.

As usual the French maintain a smiling, calm exterior and yet the very fact that the guns have actually got the range on the beloved Paris is a bitter and terrible blow. However, they'd rather die than show they are the least bit daunted in spite of the latest outrage. It is interesting to watch the people in the streets, when a shell falls too close to be comfortable. They jump a bit, look at each other, laugh and shrug their shoulders, with some remark about " how lucky that it didn't drop at our feet," or " we did well to walk fast or we would surely have been in direct line." Every one guys the next person and so they walk on looking now and again at their watches to see when the next shell is due. Surrounded by such spirit and pluck one simply cannot be afraid, although during my few days in Paris, Bertha was booming all day and there were air raids every night. However, one gets accustomed to anything and since I got back to this peaceful place, the intense quiet has been almost oppressive!

The time is certainly a critical one and although one hears only scraps and rumors, our hearts are in our mouths, and things look pretty black. People with small children and every one who could get away have left Paris, all things

of great value have been removed and the government offices are said to be ready to move south at a moment's notice. Huge wagons of furniture and household goods are leaving the city in great numbers.

This morning's paper tells of a German submarine in American waters. Of course we are furious though hardly surprised. It seems to be just another demonstration of trying every kind of devilment in this desperate effort to disable the Allies from every angle at once.

You can fancy with what intense interest and anxiety we watch for extras and life has become just one breathless time of waiting from one bulletin to the next. Every one has so many, many friends and relatives on the long line, and hundreds of conflicting rumors and reports come in constantly until one is distracted for a bit of authentic news.

The Sammies are right in the "thick of it" now and doing better, especially the Marines, even than was expected of them. It's all very wonderful and these days make one prouder than ever of being an American.

Aix, June 12th, 1918.

New York, I see by the papers, is in darkness. How strange it must seem to you all.

Over here everything seems to be happening at once. Of course, you have seen by now that my Marines have made an everlasting name for

themselves and that it looks as though they had turned the tide. The whole of France is ringing with their praises and I am so proud and happy I could burst! Their extraordinary record of the past week is especially wonderful news to those who know how patiently they awaited their chance. I do hope they haven't been unmercifully cut to pieces. The interest in every tiny village about here is intense, especially now that the new offensive has started on the American Front. I am of course very keen to get up nearer the lines, and perhaps before long I shall have a chance.

Do write about things at home and how people are standing the terrible casualty lists. We hear absolutely nothing of home morale, I suppose because we are so put to it to keep up our own. I believe you really get more news of the grim doings up the line than we do, and probably realize as much as we that the climax is rapidly approaching.

CHAPTER V

THE LORRAINE SECTOR

Paris, June 28th, 1918.

Don't be surprised at the heading on this letter, I am quite safe and sound and haven't been expelled from the Y! I am, however, on my way to a new post and one which ought to be most interesting. In the Y. M. C. A. they try and move you ever so often, to keep you from going stale on the work. The other day our chief came down to Aix and decided that four of us who had been there five months needed a change of work. Consequently, Alice, two others, and yours truly are here for reassignment.

The strain of Leave-Area work, the continual entertaining is really worse than manual labor, and I can see that we need to get off for a time. The change is for the sake of greater efficiency in the work, and naturally that's what we all want and are working towards.

Paris is terribly quiet. No Bertha — no bombs — I scarcely know it!

En Route from Paris to Baccarat,
July 3rd, 1918.

Behold us actually on our way to what the Paris Office calls "an unusual and most inter-

esting post" and after days of red tape and orders, we are at last on the train which will take us via Châlons, Nancy and Lunéville,— names that have become so famous of late and which fill us with a vague feeling of thrill as though at last we were to get a bit closer to those trenches of which we have heard so much. I don't want you to think that we are looking forward to our work as an exciting adventure. Nothing could be farther from the ideal for which we are striving, but of course one can't help but be thankful for the great privilege which has come after so many months of waiting, and our spirits are high and somehow I feel as though I were opening the door to greater service and opportunity than ever before.

Our train has jogged along through this hot day, stopping here and there in an aimless way as if to get its breath and mop its brow before starting on through the baked and sultry countryside. Of course, we haven't missed a trick and at Châlons and Nancy saw the first signs of wreckage and ruin.

It is now late in the afternoon. We are on the last lap of our long journey, having just left Lunéville. Before long, we shall be in Baccarat, where the Y Headquarters for this region are situated. This Vosges country is exquisite although the small villages show terrible signs of demolition. The Germans have been here,—it

is easy enough to see that — although a peasant woman in our compartment says, "not since 1914," except, she adds, "*les avions*," which have made night hideous ever since.

It begins to look more warlike. The roads are covered with cleverly made camouflage and the small houses near the rail heads are painted in patterns of bright colors. The open cars that carry the great guns are entirely draped with these wonderfully wrought coverings of leaves and vines made of ancient rags and scraps and tinted in the most realistic shades and tones. Few women are traveling this way and our uniforms and American accent cause great interest at the small stations along the way.

Baccarat, July 4th, 1918.

We arrived last night at about seven o'clock but it was still light enough to see the town which is mostly a heap of crumbling stone and ruin.— The main street hasn't a building that is whole. Awful as it seems, it is wonderfully beautiful. The dust is thick and the wind blows it about in sheets. The sun was just setting, giving a blood-red background to the ruined walls and turrets. It reminded me of those ominous, realistic posters, which are everywhere showing the wreckage of war. Up to that moment, they had seemed an exaggeration.

I am at present writing amidst great confusion. Of course there not being many houses intact,

the billets are few and far between. So, for the moment, the four of us are making ourselves comfortable in a small hotel which the Y has just taken over to be used as main Canteen, warehouse, and general offices. This delectable spot is entirely whole but, as it hasn't been used for three years, is in a state of dirt impossible to describe. The four of us — that is, Alice, Westy, Squibby and I — have taken one room with two beds and a bureau in it and are proceeding to get settled. The windows have to be open for air and as the street below is the route used to the Front, the traffic of trucks and ammunition carts is terrific. The dust and flies blow into our room in great clouds and we are covered from head to foot with grime and dirt. However, we are getting our various blanket rolls and bags unpacked and will be in some sort of order before night.

I would give my eye-tooth for a bowl of hot water, a clean towel and some soap. But water is hard to procure and there is nothing to get it in or pour it into for the moment! So I will have to go dirty I guess.

Early this morning we went to mass; as Alice was going. I am thankful that we tagged along. The Catholic Church here, as in every place in France, is the most beautiful thing in the village, and the nucleus around which everything revolves. The building is quite lovely. Very simple in architecture but beautiful lines and a

few good statues. It is almost entirely intact although it stands in the center of the most ruined part of the town!

When we went in, I was staggered at the huge congregation. Then I saw that the church was entirely filled with American soldiers. We were the only women.

The early morning sunlight was streaming through the stained glass windows and lighting up hundreds of bowed heads. There wasn't a sound but the soft notes of the organ. I never knew how expressive the back of a man's head could be. All these boys so terribly intent upon mass that was being said in a language few of them could understand, and yet the great common bond of religion that goes deeper than mere spoken words, had drawn them together, as though they realized it might be their last chance to pray in God's house. I can't begin to explain the effect it had on me. In the few moments of quiet before the service was over, the air seemed alive with fragments of prayer and in the intense, vibrating stillness, I have never felt God nearer.

It was a sweet way to start my new work and somehow I feel as though I could move mountains.

Baccarat, July 10th, 1918.

The other girls have been stationed in three little villages near by and I have been kept here in Baccarat where, for the present, I have a can-

teen of my own in what is called the French half of the town, the other half being entirely occupied by the Headquarters staff of the Division to which we are attached. There is already a Y canteen started over there so I am installing myself in what was a corner saloon, the dirtiest, darkest place imaginable with very un-Y-like ribald scenes on the walls. I hope we can put a coat of light colored paint on the somber woodwork and brighten it up a bit. In spite of its unattractive appearance it is always full of soldiers and when I appear early in the morning with my mammoth key, there is always a long line of boys waiting for me to open up shop. This isn't to be my permanent job; I am going to help run the canteen in the Y Hotel as soon as it is opened. It will undoubtedly be much larger than this one and we shall be able to take care of more men.

I have procured an excellent billet in the house of an ancient French lady. My room is beautifully clean and scoured daily by my landlady's maid "Joséphine" who looks about a hundred and fifty. These two old dames remained in Baccarat all during the German invasion in 1914 and a German general slept in my room; it ought to give me bad dreams but somehow I manage to sleep like a log! Madame M. is a lady of some social position in these parts, shown by the fact that she has a servant to look after her and a little plot of ground behind her house where grow

the most bewitching old-fashioned flowers. She has snow-white hair and large brown eyes that always wear a half frightened look, as well they may, for the death-dealing German planes have harassed this poor soul night and day for four years. She told me that in 1914 she and her faithful old servant were among the very few who remained in their little town. She said "Mais, mademoiselle, I could not leave my little house, the home where my husband had lived and died and which held all the beautiful memories of my life. I had heard of course what those 'sales Boches' had done to the old women and the children in the town near here but as I said to Joséphine 'I will take my chance with the Germans, but leave my house, never!'" So the entire population of the town was hustled into safety and very few civilians remained to see their homes demolished. The French soldiers knew they were outnumbered and yet that didn't keep them from fighting to the last ditch and for four days the terrible massacre continued and the town was shelled unmercifully. Madame and Joséphine, hidden in the cellar, heard the whistle of shells and the explosions all around until it seemed a miracle that the roof wasn't torn off their house and that the brick walls didn't fall in on top of them. The Germans finally advanced to the edge of the river which separates the two parts of the town and then it became a hand-to-hand affair until a huge shell burst in

the center of the bridge, blowing to atoms several hundred French soldiers who were attempting to hold it against the enemy. Madame says the river was filled with floating bodies and red with blood for days afterwards. The Germans threw a hurriedly constructed passageway of boards across the stream and only then did the French retire to the country directly behind Baccarat, outnumbered three or four times by the advancing Boches. Suddenly, the shelling ceased and Madame knew that the enemy had been victorious. She said, "I took my courage in my hands; I put on my Sunday dress of black silk; then walked out of my door with my head high and met the German staff officers as they came up the street." I could visualize it all. The stern hard faces of the Boche staff, their horses brought to a sudden stop before the house of this ancient silver-haired gentlewoman who stood on her own door step indomitable and unafraid before what she knew were the most bestial and heartless brutes in all history. Somehow something must have touched them, although it is hard to believe that they possess a single chord that can be touched by the big and noble. However, she told me that they didn't molest or hurt her in any way and finally when they were forced to retire after some months by the then victorious French, they thanked her for her hospitality.

Since then, she has had French officers billeted in her house and one or two Americans who won

her old heart with boxes of chocolate and little packages of sweet cookies, such as she hasn't had since the beginning of the war.

Baccarat, July 15th, 1918.

I am now working in the big new canteen at Headquarters, and believe me, it is one busy place. I'm on duty only eight hours a day but during that time I work like mad and scarcely have time to breathe. There is a line that files in and past our counter and then out through a farther door. That line never stops from the time we are open in the morning until it gets dark at night. I am kept hopping like a grasshopper and bed looks pretty good to me at the end of the day. It's a fine life though, just work and food and sleep and I am thriving and growing fat on it!

We are at present attached to the 77th Division which is, as you know, the New York drafted bunch. It is, I believe, a unique division and to me a most interesting one. It looks as though they had taken a cross section of New York City and divided it into Battalions, Regiments, Companies and all the different units and branches of the service which go to make up a division. The officers are almost entirely from the "four hundred" so called, and the enlisted men from the lower East Side, Italians, Polish Jews, Greeks, Serbs, in fact, representatives from most every country in the world. Many of them can't

even speak English intelligibly and I have been thankful for my scraps of Italian, French and even German to make them understand me. They are a ferocious looking lot for the most part and always sure that I am trying to skin them. It's rather pathetic and I try to be patient and make them understand that the Y may have made mistakes unintentionally but that we are not in France to profiteer. It's a bit discouraging at the end of a long hot day to have some boy throw the change you have given him down on the counter and announce in a loud voice that the "Y girl" is trying to cheat him. They haven't learned the value of French money, not having been over here long and are tremendously suspicious of what they call "that tin Chinese money" (the French have punctured their smaller coins in the center in order to save metal) and are always sure that you are trying to put something over on them. However, there are many who make up for the disagreeable ones. Two or three Irish lads with merry blue eyes and the most alluring of brogues are generally hanging over the end of the counter and are very much my friends. They are always right on the spot when there is a case of tobacco to be opened or heavy things to lift and have even helped me squeeze lemons! The work is a never ceasing joy to me on account of these bright spots and many others that turn up constantly to make me happier than I have ever been in my

life. No one who hasn't tried it, knows what a satisfaction a long day's work can bring. Thank God for the opportunity.

Baccarat, July 20th, 1918.

The American "come-back" at Château Thierry, beginning day before yesterday, is, of course, the one subject of conversation here. No words can describe one's pride and relief. Our boys have made themselves immortal. France will never forget their grit and pluck — qualities characteristically American.

Yesterday Elsie Janis came here and gave two shows so that no one should miss seeing her. The Y has taken over a big assembly hall and turned it into a theater. Well, I can assure you that every inch of that place was utilized. The boys had known for some days ahead that she was coming and, hours before the doors were opened, the open space in front of the building was massed solid. Every one was looking up at the clear sky and hoping that "Jerry would give us a rest to-night and let us enjoy Elsie without thought of bombs." Luckily, Jerry didn't start his evening strafing until just as the last show was out and then every one had ample time to run to shelter before the noise began. If he had known how many human birds he could have killed with "one stone," he undoubtedly would have made an earlier start from Boche-land and dropped a neat little bomb right on the center

of our theater roof! However, for once he didn't spoil our fun, and Elsie was quite at her best and more alluring and peppy than ever, in the latest of Parisian models and a coquettish black tam with a tassel pulled down over her curls. Suddenly there she was, in the middle of the stage and to these boys to whom the white lights of Broadway have been the breath of life, she seemed a veritable piece of "little old New York." I thought they would tear the roof off with their wild applause and cheers, and she just stood there smiling until they had yelled themselves hoarse. Then for an hour and a half she kept them rocking with laughter and once or twice brought them very close to tears. She sang, she danced, told funny stories and made fun of the officers and mimicked in her inimitable way until those boys were bodily transported from that dusty little French town, back to the atmosphere which spells home to them. In other words, for an hour and a half they forgot the war and were happy. Surely Elsie Janis is doing her bit if any one is, and it's a jolly big bit too!

The whole world seems to be in France, at least the masculine half of it. I meet so many men I know wherever I go. Baccarat hasn't been an exception to the rule. Some have been to Aix, some I knew in Bordeaux and some at home — centuries ago before the war. A great friend of Ted's and of my Buffalo friends, Chester Plimpton, is here, and I see a good deal of him. Such

a hash in a town like this and such types! I wish you could see one little Jewish second lieutenant. He is the laugh of the whole place and the boys tell me that if you were to slice him in half you would find a broad yellow streak from his head to his heels. Aside from that he is the most absurd little snob. Five minutes after he had met me he said, "Are you one of *the* Baldwins of New York?" I said I hoped I was and since then he has decided I was worth knowing and I had a wonderful time kidding him without his catching on at all! I can't quite make out whether he has me associated in his mind with the Baldwin Locomotive or the Piano, and perhaps he thinks the Apple was named after Dad! He talks with a studied carelessness about "my friend Teddy Roosevelt" and "When I visited Vincent Astor last summer, etc." The other officers just draw him out and then go into hysterics and laugh till the tears roll down their cheeks and the poor little nut talks on and on. Some day I shall mention casually that my mother is a washlady and my father a green grocer. He swallows everything whole, bait, hook *et tout!* He is a stage manager in the States and I'll bet my bottom dollar that he wears a checked suit, a brown derby and button boots!

Baccarat, July 24th, 1918.

A wonderful moon to-night and the country

side transformed under its silvery radiance. We have had terrible nights for a week now and we are all more or less worn out with little sleep and long hot days. The German planes have been coming over as regularly as clock work and as this sector is unimportant compared to others farther up the line, we aren't really protected at all. An English aëroplane field lies some miles in the country behind us and they do what they can to help drive off the enemy planes but they aren't able to accomplish much as they have a huge area to cover and very little equipment.

I thought I knew what an air raid was like after being in Paris for six months, but in comparison, those raids seem like mere child's play. Ever since the moon was two days old, the Germans haven't missed a single night and as soon as it gets dark, we hear the ominous whirr. At once the peace and quiet evaporate as if by magic and the whole atmosphere becomes alive with expectation and silent fears. The church bell is set ringing furiously and the doleful sirens begin their wailing from several parts of the town at once. Windows are thrown open and people begin to call back and forth to each other. This lasts only a few moments and then complete and utter silence. Every one has gone below ground and the town lies waiting in the moonlight.

At first I refused to take refuge "dans la cave" (the cellar) partly because I didn't want to be

smothered to death beneath the plaster and brick walls of the house. A direct hit seemed infinitely preferable to that, also, strange as it may seem, I had no desire to get out of bed. I had lost so much sleep and had been working so hard, that night generally found me thankful for a bed. Even if the noise of guns kept me awake I could rest, and the moist, chilly cellar held no charms! However, I found that staying "au lit" in the midst of an air raid was unheard of in these parts and Madame M. rushed into my room and with tears in her eyes implored me to accompany her below. The poor little old lady fears the *avions* above all else and the sound of their motors drives her into a frenzy of fear. In order to calm her I threw on a few clothes and we stumbled down the narrow stairs and spent the dark hours huddled in a little group around a candle that sputtered and flickered in the draughty, damp air. Our party consists always of Madame, Joséphine, a French officer, who is likewise billeted in the house, and myself. The first night that we spent in the cellar, he was already below when we ladies arrived. I have never seen a more droll figure and I wonder now how I ever kept my face straight. He was attired in pink and white pajamas and on his head at a jaunty angle sat his most dressy uniform cap covered with gold braid and pale blue broadcloth! Undoubtedly he felt it added dignity and a certain modesty to his appearance. As we came

BACCARAT. EN ROUTE TO THE CANTEEN.

down he was pacing up and down the mud floor in his bare feet! He told me that he had been through four years of war, had seen comrades blown to atoms right beside him. "I know what these bombs can do, I have seen with my two eyes, it is folly not to seek shelter in a raid, so when I hear the Boches coming, I leap from my bed *et je me sauve, Mademoiselle.*" I felt that he was right and that the French must be thinking some of us very children who are still taking war as a game, and looking upon our folly and daring as bravery. Surely no one has any business to waste his life. For the first and perhaps the last time our lives are infinitely important and useful.

This officer is really a very good sort and entertains us during the long hours with tales of all sorts. We discuss the war at great length and try and keep our minds occupied and off of the terrible sounds overhead. It's great for my French and I am improving. Sometimes the noise is deafening, the anti-air-craft guns keep up a continuous fire and yet the Germans don't seem to be the least bit daunted and fly just above the tops of the trees, placing their bombs with the most pitiless accuracy. Last night three houses in this neighborhood were hit and in the old mill, half a block away, a young woman and her little girl were killed. It was a ghastly few hours. Madame had one fit of hysterics right after another and threw herself about the cellar

in a spasm of fear, trembling violently and moaning and crying. It was one of the most pathetic and terrible sights I have ever seen. We tried to quiet her but as the bombs were literally falling all about us, there wasn't much one could say to cheer her. When one plane had dropped its supply of horror it would dash back and in ten minutes another would be swooping and sailing above us and the crash and uproar would begin again. In order that they may see better to do their hideous work, they drop a flare which illuminates the town as though it were day. By the time the strong light has burned itself out several bombs can be neatly placed.

The raid generally begins about nine o'clock and the planes come over in rapid succession until dawn. It is extraordinary what an effect the sound of the German motor has upon one. The noise even at a great distance will wake me out of a sound sleep whereas our own planes can fly right past my window and I never know it.

This morning the town is really upset. Last night's raid was the worst yet. Two of our soldiers in the Evacuation Hospital were killed and a great number of French. A bomb lit across the street from the Y and this morning I found all my canteen windows smashed into a thousand pieces. The Boches dropped several notes all over the streets written in French which said "If you think last night's raid a bad one, wait for to-night. We will break all records." The

consequence is that the morale is not very good, every one worn out with no sleep, horror piled on horror, and the anticipation of worse things to-night.

Later — Same day.

To-day is a sizzler, quite the worse we've had. The dust pours in at the windows and the canteen is black with flies. We've been making lemonade for hundreds of hot, tired soldiers. They come in white with dust and the perspiration running down their cheeks. No cotton uniforms to be issued this summer; the boys have to wear their woolly winter ones, poor darlings, and can't even take their blouses off. The result is that if this weather continues the entire A. E. F. will be reduced to a grease spot!

We have made a hundred and sixty liters of lemonade to-day; the canteen has been jammed to the doors since early morning with men, tongues hanging out and clammering for something "cold and wet." The boys stand around in a huge ring while we make the lemonade, offering all kinds of advice and suggestions; I have quite a time keeping them on the other side of the counter; they all want to help but we can't use more than three stalwart and professional lemon squeezers! When the huge tank is finally filled, there are loud cheers from all present and it is worth anything to see the gusto with which they dispatch the lemonade down their dusty throats.

How I love this place,— it's perfectly great being attached to a division.

Westy, Alice, Squibby, who have canteens in little villages nearby, are in here quite frequently and we compare notes and discuss methods, and our various problems at length. I imagine some of us will shortly be sent back to Aix as our month of change is nearing its end. I can't tell you how I hate the thought of leaving, although of course I want to be where I am most needed. The simplicity of this place is a great contrast to Aix and does appeal to me so much more than the gay whirl down there with the Casino and all its marble halls and broad terraces. There the boys come and go and you do all you can to cheer them, but here they aren't on leave and are up against the real thing, and, if possible, need a bit of feminine companionship more than anywhere else. Also one belongs to a unit and after a while you come to feel a very distinct sense of proprietorship, your hopes and fears and special prayers are centered about the men of your outfit and their failures and successes are very much your own. O! I do hope that the Y will let me stay right where I am. I have made up my mind of course to be a good soldier whatever comes, but I am hoping, hoping hard every minute that I shall be allowed to stay.

Baccarat, July 25th, 1918.

Last night right after the canteen closed, some

of us decided to walk out to a neighboring hillside and watch the expected raid from a distance. We knew we should be up all night anyway and all had grown a bit weary of their respective cellars and dugouts.

It was the most gorgeous night I have ever seen, a full moon which eliminated practically all the stars with its brilliance. We climbed up and up through the silvery woods and at last reached the summit. Nearby was an enormous natural grotto cut out of the side of the hill. We suddenly realized that the place was full of people; their voices could be heard distinctly and walking to the entrance of the cave we looked in. About fifteen or twenty families had settled themselves for the night. The ground was covered with blankets upon which lay sleeping children of all ages. Some of the babies didn't look more than a few weeks old. Here and there at the back of the cave were lights; near the mouth one could see quite plainly. There were almost no men, just mothers who had brought their little ones away from the menaced town.

We sat near the cave for hours, looking down on the roofs of Baccarat, the river glistening below us in the moonlight. It was all marvelously beautiful, utter silence everywhere. As I say, we sat there for hours. The Germans didn't come. They didn't have to. Those diabolical notes of warning had spoiled the peace of mind of the whole town. It had sent the anxious

young mothers with their babies to sleep in the woods and the hilltops expecting to find their homes smashed to atoms on their return. Those who stayed in the town spent the night straining their ears for the dreaded sound and scanning the heavens for the enemy that had warned them of his coming. The suspense was even worse than if he had come. Is there anything those keen, heartless Germans have not thought of to torture the minds and bodies of this harassed people!

To-day every one is worn to a frazzle from apprehension and nervous exhaustion and undoubtedly to-night will bring a fleet of enemy planes. But, as these heroic souls say, "one must be patient, *c'est la Guerre.*"

Baccarat, August 5th, 1918.

Since my last letter there have been great changes. In fact, the 77th Division was ordered up the line and moved out bodily within a few days. The 37th Division (Ohio National Guard) had replaced them and we are now attached to them and adjusting ourselves to an entirely new bunch of men. The Y. M. C. A. staff of the 77th didn't take any women with them at all; they said the place they were going to was too dangerous. Of course, we were much disappointed and it was hard seeing them march away without us. However, our new division looks fine and I like the type of men of which it is made up. They

have just been paid and you can therefore imagine that we have done a rushing business. To-day has been full. I started in at 8:30, was on the canteen until noon, then made two hundred and fifty doughnuts to be sent out to-night and distributed in the trenches. Lately we have made between us about a thousand daily and when the night trucks go up the line with the supplies they take them along. It's only a few kilometers to the front line trenches and as this is a quieter sector than some, the boys get a chance to indulge in a doughnut or two, while they keep watch.

After my batch of doughnuts was done, I helped our Y treasurer, mending money, etc. until six; then on the canteen again until eight. These evening hours are always our busiest ones and, in the midst of a huge rush, our Y chief came back from Paris with some mail. It was quite maddening. There was a big bunch for me and I laid it under the end of my counter where I could look at it while I worked, hoping that I'd get a second to peek inside at least one of the home letters of which there were three. However, the "second" never came as I worked straight through until the M. P. marched in and ordered lights out. (We're not supposed to keep our place open after dark as that necessitates two or three candles and since the recent bad air-raids, one can't so much as light a match, excepting behind closed blinds.)

Letters mean so much in this tiny, out-of-the-way spot, that no one who hasn't experienced it can realize what an awful thing it is to have your mail sitting there before you and not be able to read it! However, I have made up for it. When I got home to-night I lighted two candles, an unheard-of extravagance, and have just had a wonderful hour of home atmosphere. It's a dark night and I guess the Germans won't be over. I feel very peaceful and comfortably installed in my big bed. In the village street below me a bunch of French people are gathered to gossip and enjoy the cool evening air. Now I can hear the tramp, tramp of marching feet on the hard white road outside. Two or three companies of Sammies are passing on their way up the line and how they are singing!

"O — hio! O — hio!
We'll win the war or know the reason why.
And when the battle's over
We'll buy a bottle o' booze
And we'll drink to old Ohio
'Til we wobble in our shoes."

They've passed now and the sound grows fainter and very sweet in the distance. The song has already become familiar to me and is constantly sung by all the various outfits of this fine Division.

All's quiet. The townsfolk have turned in and I am about to follow their example. It gives one such a proud feeling of security to know that a

long column of strong khaki-clad figures are marching out into the night to stand between, and singing as they go!

Baccarat, August 15th, 1918.

For three days now we have been running our canteen under an awning on the main village street. The reason for this is that our canteen room is being all built over. First an enormous counter that runs the whole length, with a wealth of shelves underneath for all our supplies. Then the walls are being papered in a cheerful yellow tone and the windows are to have strips of bright chintz. Very gay and pretty it will be.

In the meantime, no county fair ever caused such a commotion as we do. The spectacle of *jeunes filles Américaines* actually selling things out on the open street is simply too much for the absurd inhabitants of this town. The first day that we opened our out-of-doors counter the soldiers could scarcely fight their way through to buy what they wanted, so surrounded were we by the gaping population. They stood in a large ring with their eyes saucer-shape and their mouths wide open. We got perfectly hysterical before the day was over. It's been rather awful, being the center of attention this way; we sha'n't be sorry to move back into the shelter of four walls where only American eyes can look at us. We've been working on our street corner amid clouds of dust and flies. This, added to millions

of small children and the usual congregation of yapping dogs makes it very amusing, though trying at times. However, I love the variety and am so thankful that the Y Headquarters in Paris are letting me stay on for a time. Perhaps if I lie low and say nothing they will forget I am out here, and I'll just move along "up" with the Division when it goes. That would be great.

Much to our regret, Chester's outfit has left and will shortly be operating on the Toul Front. Work, being engineering, will necessarily be of a dangerous nature.

Baccarat, September 5th, 1918.

The papers have been a never-ending wonder the past few days and the news from the front is pretty fine. The future certainly looks full of promise. Of course, every one is jumping to conclusions at once and talking about spending Christmas in Berlin or back in the States! That of course is too good to be true, but peace doesn't seem over a year away and it makes one feel pretty happy. The end certainly is in sight and already I find myself planning busily about what I am going to do when I get home. I think I'll spend the first week just looking hard at all my family; after that I'll eat all the things I haven't had for fourteen months. Also, I shall never again wear sensible war-like clothes. No more tailor-made waists and skirts for mine. I'll live

in chiffon gowns, the sheerest of silk stockings and thin soled pumps!

This little place may not be our headquarters for very much longer. The Division is going to move soon, at least so it is rumored, and thank goodness the Y and its force go with them. We don't know where we shall be headed for, except that it's up the line and may be any of three fronts. I shall now have the experience of traveling along as a regular part of this army of ours and I know it's going to be the most interesting yet. It's quite wonderful knowing so many, many members of this huge Division. Wherever one goes the streets, the shops are full of soldiers and they're always covered with smiles; it makes me feel the whole world is my friend and it is a nice sensation.

Naturally this talk of moving to some other place is all rumor yet, and may not come off at all. I get so many rumors all the time; as soon as the boys hear anything they come tearing into the Y to impart it, and I have learned by experience to take it with a grain of salt. I just wanted you to know ahead, so that a change of base wouldn't surprise or worry you if it came.

Thank you for sending the little editorial comments on Mrs. Deland's article, and the criticism. At the time the article was written, no one who heard it on this side of the water, felt that it was pro-German propaganda. I don't think any-

one quite realized in the States the very dark hours through which France passed during the spring and early summer. Many Americans at that time felt that from now on the task of driving the Germans back and of crushing their Kultur, was ours and ours alone. France, they felt, was well nigh spent and of course the whole world knows that America came into the war just in time. Some French people felt that it was too late and in her article Mrs. Deland quotes from what they said. You must remember that six months have wrought a miracle; half a year ago defeat was staring us in the face; conditions at home seemed hopelessly tangled and wound about with red tape. The vanguard of the A. E. F. was not properly supplied, and to us on this side our country seemed entirely blind to the fact and certainly not awake to the critical need for efficient and double-quick action. I remember Mrs. Deland saying that she wanted to throw something before the eye of the American public that would stir it up to a realization of the situation as it really was. Since then the miracle has happened. America has shaken herself free from the petty entanglements which held her down, and has turned the tide. Mrs. Deland's bomb came after it was needed and now in the light of the recent, glorious victories it sounds like pro-German propaganda. It is so easy to forget, when things are running smoothly, that there were ever hours of doubt and that drastic

measures were necessary. No one who wasn't here on the spot can know what those months of retreat meant to the French, and to those of us who were privileged to live amongst them during that time. They were prepared to fight to the last man, to lose their last drop of blood for France, and yet no one could be sure, not even the usual cock-sure Americans, that the German advance could be withheld. And then came Bertha. Paris, the heart of France, assaulted! The Germans never did anything in all the four years of cunning savagery that cut so deep into the French nation.

As I say, no one who did not see with his own eyes can understand how close the front line seemed,— even to those of us who were tucked away in the mountains of Savoy. So don't judge Mrs. Deland's article too severely. Her idea was to awaken America and so save this wondrous and brave little country, not to mention the rest of the civilized world. The warning wasn't needed. It came when the air was ringing with the valor of our own beloved marines,— and Paris had been saved.

Then every one laughed at fears, pessimistic remarks were scorned, labeled pro-German, and yet at one time just such medicine was needed.

After all, can any one foretell the future of the vivid present in which we are living? We know that we are working toward the light — each of us weaves a world beyond the war to our liking —

some of us see more hope in it than others. To Mrs. Deland it seems a more distant thing, but nevertheless she sees it. Not in our day, perhaps, but ultimately a new and better world.

Baccarat, September 13th, 1918.

Our orders to move have come really before we expected them, and the town and all the surrounding landscape is a-bustle with preparations. We are to be ready and off just as soon as possible and, from the tone of the orders, I imagine there is some place up the line where we are needed and that we are to hurry. All the soldiers are tremendously excited and in a state to be on the way, as we all are.

We, at the canteen, are busier than ever, of course; the boys are stocking up for the trip. All the outlying huts are being closed and their supplies and secretaries arriving here at Headquarters. It's a wonderful sensation to be a part of the huge preparation. This moving along with a family of thousands of members is to me quite thrilling. I feel sort of like the night before Christmas and act exactly as much like a child as do any of the soldiers. In a certain way, of course, I hate to leave. These have been two wonderful months and have meant so much in the way of experience and opportunity. However, one is ever keen for the unknown and for that which lies ahead and I should be heartbroken if my Division should go without me.

Moyen, September 17th, 1918.

I certainly am the most fortunate of mortals! This is what has happened. Alice, as I wrote you, has been with the 148th Infantry ever since the 37th Division came into the sector, and as she has done such excellent work with them, the commanding officer told her that, if she could get another girl, he would be very glad to have her travel with the troops and get up a canteen for them at each stopping place. You can fancy Alice's delight, and mine when she asked me to be the "other girl"!

The remainder of the Y women are going to be moved *en masse* to a place near Bar-le-Duc to await developments and see where they can be most useful. Alice and I won't have to leave the Division at all and are going right along with it. Aren't we the lucky guys?

Moyen, September 18th, 1918.

Such crowded, vivid days as these have been and how I wish I might paint them on paper for you. We have a camouflaged Ford *camion,* chuck full of supplies and are given our orders each day and official looking road maps to show us where to go. We can move so much quicker than the regiment that we generally shoot ahead and have our canteen in readiness by the time the boys arrive. There is a nice Y man with one eye who drives the *camion* and when the three of us are packed in the narrow seat and the back is stacked

high with cigarettes, chocolate, etc., not to mention our faithful bed-rolls, no car on earth but a Lizzie could make the grade. However, she does nobly and we have grown very fond of her already.

If we were busy before, we are certainly busy now. We've set up our canteen in a bewitching nook. The nuns in this town have let us have a little room in one end of their convent and have been very kind although, of course, intensely curious at seeing us traveling about with the army. It's surprising how soon a place looks homelike. Two hours' work and the dark little room with its mud floor looked quite attractive. We made some rough writing tables and stuck candles about everywhere. As soon as the regiment arrived, of course, we were swamped. The boys sat all over the floor and on the window sill and we had a very merry time until well after dark when taps sounded and they all disappeared in the most amazing manner. I guess that old convent never heard so much noise before and I hope we didn't shock those gentle little nuns with our singing and laughter.

We've been messing on the march with our Colonel and his staff and they have been endlessly kind and thoughtful. The boys have been adorable too and helped us in a thousand ways. We are now awaiting orders to move on to the next place, there being several stops before our destination is reached. We are working from 8 A. M.

to 10 P. M. and both of us never felt better. This certainly "is the life" and we're having the time of our lives.

Fains, September 19th, 1918.

Last night we didn't get much sleep. We lost our regiment and spent most of the wee small hours chasing clews all over the countryside. You can't imagine how awful it is getting separated and not knowing just where the outfit is. I am always in a panic for fear that by some hook or crook they will leave us behind when they get to the "real front" and that we sha'n't be able to do our tiny bit to help. So last night I had just about given up hope of ever seeing those hundreds of familiar smiling faces again. However, we did find them at last camped near Bar-le-Duc and we stopped there at dawn for a few hours' sleep in the very filthiest bed I have ever seen.

We had quite a time with our *camion* and with our driver. Lizzie needed gas and the Y man needed his supper. He told us that he wasn't entirely in sympathy with an army that allowed ladies to run all over the earth setting up canteens for it and that "woman's place was in the home," etc., and not in a gasless Ford on a dark French road in the middle of the night! We tried to smooth him down; one couldn't blame him exactly. He is a bully good sport but this time he was adamant. At the time we were

crawling past a huge long train of *camions* and as no lights were allowed it did seem pitchy black. Suddenly we came to a cross-roads and a tall figure stepped up to our car. He was the officer in charge of the truck train and had been standing at the cross-roads to point out the way. He was somewhat surprised when a woman's voice answered his curt questions and at once wanted to do all he could to help us find our outfit. Alice gingerly put on her flashlight for a moment to look at the map and they both bent over the complicated road system. Suddenly there was an exclamation and Alice said "Why, Jim,—how extraordinary!" They proved to be old friends and in a moment were reminiscing and thousands of miles away in "God's country." It seemed so strange her running into him there on that dark country road, and both of them on their way up into the fighting! We couldn't stop but a moment and he and his boys had to get many miles before dawn, so we jolted on. (I may say here that this fine boy never came back from the Front.)

About an hour later Lizzie stopped half way up a very steep hill and refused to budge. On investigation, we found that the last few drops of gasoline had all run out of the engine on account of the steep slope of the hill. It looked very much as though we should have to curl up on the side of the road for the rest of the night but we finally thought of a plan. We took all the cases

and baggage out and lifted Lizzie bodily and turned her around so that she headed down instead of up hill. In this way the gas all ran back into the engine and, after we had loaded the stuff again, Lizzie cheerfully backed up the hill and ran merrily as far as the next town where she had a good long drink!

It surely was an interesting night. I'm afraid Alice and I enjoyed it more than the Y man, who was half-starved by morning.

Fains, September 20th, 1918.

We are already settled at our second stopping place and shall be here some days, probably until further orders come to move along. We left our last stopping place the dav before yesterday and have been on the road practically ever since. The run over was simply beautiful, a cloudless, crisp autumn day and the country most lovely. I think for both of us it was the happiest day we have spent in France. We ran into two or three other regiments not our own, although moving in the same direction. The roads were crowded with army trains, camions in endless lines, winding across the landscape as far as the eye could reach, and, of course, all filled with the familiar and beloved khaki figures. As we passed each motor truck, naturally we smiled and waved. Instantly the whole truck came to life, a great shout went up and the boys tore their caps off their heads and waved them in

the air, shouting "Honest-to-God, American girls!" I have never been so touched as at the transformation that came over their faces. As we met, they were sober and more or less uninterested in their surroundings. We passed, leaving each carload, full of a broadly grinning, gesticulating throng. The foregoing sounds horribly conceited, I know, but I can trust you to realize that the individual is not the thing that counts over here. It is just one's nationality and the touch of home. Personally, of course, we aren't anything. It's merely the country we stand for and the language we speak that does the good.

Half an hour after we arrived in this muddy little town we had set up shop, this time in a French barracks and our dirt floor was invisible under a multitude of muddy feet. The boys find the "Y" so quickly and ten minutes after our boxes had been carried in, the place was jammed to the doors.

We have found a billet in a rather primitive though alluring place. Our little box-like room is built right into one corner of the stable, and we walk out of our door into the hayloft! The space next to us is occupied by a large family of rabbits. They are doubtless later to be turned into a fine stew, for which the French are so famous. However, the bunnies seem oblivious of their fate and eat and wiggle their noses happily from morning to night.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARGONNE

Revigny, September 21st, 1918.

Yesterday, very unexpectedly came orders to move from Fains. This time we knew it would mean the Front. We studied out with great care the roads that would lead to our destination. The adjutant gave us our written orders as usual and we started off ahead of the regiment with a certain feeling of thrill. We took the wonderful main road that leads from Bar-le-Duc to Verdun and which is kept as smooth as the top of a billiard table. It's hard to see how they manage to keep it in condition as the traffic is necessarily terrific.

Such a golden autumn day I have never seen and the red-and-yellow of the foliage along the way was marvelous beyond words. On and on we went with our map spread out on our knees, through scores of tiny red-roofed villages. Lizzie was running like velvet and the miles slipped away as by magic under those nimble wheels. The great highway was a most interesting sight. Many divisions, both American and French, were moving, all headed the same way. Hundreds of camions, tractors, tanks, soup kitchens, in fact,

all the elaborate paraphernalia that belongs to a fighting division. Scores of massive guns, rolling along, gracefully draped in their gowns of camouflage and pulled by lumbering, snorting trucks.

The whole A. E. F. seemed to be on the road or camped along the side. Here and there we passed a colored regiment, the first I had seen of our broadly smiling colored boys and how strange and out of place they looked in this white ribbon of a French road. Towards sunset time the congestion on the road grew less and we began to notice that the villages looked a bit the worse for shells that had fallen here and there. The place we were headed for was just about an inch away (on the map!) and in a quarter of an hour we were in the center of the village (Ville en Coucance) and an M. P. at the corner was pointing out the way to Corps Headquarters, where he said some "Second Louis" would give us information concerning the location decided on for our regiment to spend the night. Alice and I left the Ford at the bottom of a hill and climbed up to a cluster of low-lying buildings which represented the 5th Corps Headquarters. As there seemed to be no one about, we walked into the first of the little bungalows. There was no "Second Louis" to be seen but, as we entered, a tall gray-haired man rose from behind a table at which he had been writing and came forward. As we saw the two stars on his shoulder we came

to attention. He asked us how we happened to be there and what he could do for us. We explained our connection with the division and presented our orders. He calmly turned them over, wrote something on the back and handed them to Alice. This is what she read:

To all sentinels and M. P.'s along the road.
These two ladies are to be returned at once to their Y. M. C. A. Heaquarters near Bar-le-Duc. By order
MAJOR GENERAL CAMERON.

When we had read it through, he said: "I cannot take the responsibility of allowing you to remain in the town. This afternoon I ordered all the civilians out and, as we are expecting a bombardment at any time, I must ask you to leave at once. I have two daughters at home just your ages. I admire the work you are doing but this is no place for women." With that he bowed us out. In the face of such orders and from a General, there was nothing to be said. We made our way silently to where Lizzie and the Y man were waiting and turned back along the road we had so recently traveled. Two such disappointed ladies you never saw. The Y man looked much relieved. He said he thought from the first that we were idiots to go so near the Front Line. It was all right for a man, but for women! — they were meant to be sheltered, etc. Such conversation didn't help, somehow!

However, one must take what comes, of course, and I haven't despaired entirely. We will surely

find some way of getting back to the boys. The rest of our Y force are here at Revigny and for the moment we have all got to wait until we can be of some real use. Perhaps that won't be until the Division has been withdrawn again and brought back here to rest. In the meantime, we spend our days in a little shed by the railroad track making doughnuts and hot chocolate for the boys that pour through here on the troop trains. We haven't any utensils so we use a wine bottle for a rolling pin and the mouth to make the hole in the center of each doughnut! It's surprising how many sided and useful a wine bottle is!

Revigny, September 25th, 1918.

The great drive has started and our division has jumped off with the rest. So much we know but absolutely nothing else. The guns are booming night and day. I wake up at night and hold my breath when I think of all those fine lads in that veritable Hell. Alice and I are champing the bit these days, I can tell you. It seems perfectly criminal to be held away back here when our own regiment may be coming out of the lines any hour and in need of a hundred things. Two others who belong to the 146th Infantry are equally impatient and we are looked upon, I fear, as the four rebels. The other women are much more sensible and don't thrash around the way we do. The Y men have gone up the line and

left us instructions to "sit on the nest" and stop fussing until they send for us.

Pagny-sur-Meuse, October 4th, 1918.

I have been out of reach of any post office for the past week and am only just now back in civilization again. Alice, the two girls (of whom I have already written), Harriet Forman and Ruth Andrews, and myself finally revolted, took our bedding rolls and musette bags and started off on "our own." We knew approximately where our Divisional Headquarters were situated and decided that some women ought to be there when the boys came out, orders or no orders. Somehow we couldn't any of us settle down in Revigny and feel right about it, so we got on a train and spent the first night in Bar-le-Duc slipping through the M. P.'s at the station without showing our movement orders, which was lucky as we had none to show! We turned our steps towards a somber house in a back alley where once before we had found a bed. (Billets are at a premium in all the towns anywhere near the lines and people generally walk the streets of Bar-le-Duc all night.) Fortunately we bribed the old woman who keeps the house to give us two beds and we had a fine sleep until 4 A. M. when we arose to catch the 4:30 that runs daily on the narrow-gauge railway up the line. We had spent an interesting half hour the night before poring over our maps and making out the quickest route.

The streets were quite deserted as we sallied forth and the rain was coming down in sheets. Luckily we had our trench coats so didn't get very wet. Near the station a crowd of night birds had gathered about a stand where an old, old woman was selling coffee by the light of a tiny gas lamp that flickered and sputtered in the wind and rain. She called it coffee but it tasted like acorns and of course there was no cream or sugar. However, it was steaming hot and we were more than thankful for the warmth.

The little toy train was already filled with soldiers when we arrived and was snorting and whistling to be off. It was so dark that except for their conversation we couldn't have told what nationality the soldiers all about us were. As soon as they realized we were women, and Americans at that, there were exclamations of surprise and we were at once given seats.

For almost two hours we jolted along in darkness, no lights being allowed, and slowly the dawn began to break and we could distinguish the blue figures sitting and lying asleep all over the seats and up and down the aisles. The rain was beating against the windows and we looked out on a dismal gray landscape with here and there a small village partially destroyed, its one street deserted and a glistening river of mud.

We cheered ourselves with a loaf of bread and a can of bully beef which we had brought with us and all the French soldiers breakfasted too on

bread, cheese and Pinard (red wine). I was so hungry and I don't think any breakfast ever tasted so good.

About eight-thirty we reached Auzéville, the end of the railroad line. We dragged our bed-rolls off, cached them in the tiny station and then waded through muddy meadows to the edge of the town. A regiment was billeted there on its way up the line and the place was crowded with American officers and soldiers. We hunted for some time before we could get a billet but finally found two beds in the house of the village groceresses. There were four of them, all old maids, and they greeted us with great enthusiasm and interest when they found we were Americans.

The town had been fearfully shelled up to the day before when the *braves Américains* had driven the enemy back through the Argonne Forest and for the first time in months the civilians had spent a quiet night, out of the cellar. Such a story as these maiden ladies had to tell! During the four years they had been obliged to evacuate many times. The French had lost and retaken the town repeatedly and each time the Germans took or demolished whatever they could lay their hands on. Nothing was left; life would have to be begun anew but at least they and theirs were safe at last. The Americans had come in the nick of time.

I wish all those at home who have made the supreme sacrifice that France and the world

might be saved, those whose boys gave their lives in the great Argonne drive, could have seen the relief and gratitude in those old French faces. It might make the burden and loss a bit easier to bear, for no crusader or knight of olden days ever died for so great and supreme a cause.

That night we spent in Auzéville and messed with some delightful Southern troops who filled us full of delicious beaten biscuit and pancakes. As we had scarcely had anything to eat since the day before we were ravenous and the boys stood around in an amused group and watched us swallow everything whole. They wanted us to stay and attach ourselves to their regiment but by that time we were in a fever of impatience to press on. So, very early the next morning, we started. It was a dark threatening day with a high wind and the road deep in mud. However, we were so thankful to have gotten that far safely that nothing else mattered. The towns we came to were full of soldiers but no civilians. The buildings were badly shot up from recent shelling and such utter desolation I have never seen. The road over which we were walking was in pretty fair shape, all except the mud, which, however, could not keep us from enjoying the tramp. One could hear the sound of the guns which grew more and more distinct of course as we got nearer the lines. We spent most of that day walking and about sundown saw the ruins of Récicourt in the distance and knew that our trip

was almost over, for Divisional Headquarters were there and also our Y men who were *not* expecting us! About four miles this side we ran into an ambulance section, the members of which had been to Aix on leave months before. They were so surprised when they saw us they stared for a full moment before they took it in. After that, they recognized us and we had a wonderful reunion there on the side of the road. The last time they had seen us we were flitting about the Casino terraces in thin summer dresses. Some change to the weather-beaten, muddy quartet that confronted them on the road to the Argonne Forest! Anyway we were certainly glad to see one another, especially out there where friends seem to mean more than anywhere else on earth.

It was quite late when we finally marched into Récicourt and I almost wept with joy at the sight of some of our divisional staff cars drawn up along the road under a camouflaged shelter. A little farther on we ran into a group of boys we knew and from then on it was a triumphal entry. As long as I live I never expect to be so happy again. It seemed a hundred years since we had seen any of the familiar faces and it was just like getting home to be with them all again. These were Headquarters boys and they told us that our regiment was expected to some back *en repos* in a very few days. After that we knew the Y men *must* let us stay and help and they did.

The line had advanced so far during the first

days of the drive that Récicourt was practically out of danger and anyway there was so much to do that four pairs of hands and feet were welcome. So we picked out a nice little ruin and put up our four cots in what was left of the second story. As luck would have it, most of the roof was still whole and only leaked in the parts of the room that we didn't frequent! The window had been blown out so we hung a blanket across. A Fatima cigarette packing-case made a fine washstand and we felt as though we were comfortably fixed for the winter. The town was certainly smashed up and mutilated beyond all description. We ran the canteen below our sleeping quarters as it was literally the only remnant of a house in the whole town with any roof at all. We were lucky to have it as the weather was very cold and the autumn rains had started, so we had to have a place where we could keep our supplies dry. I have never enjoyed the work more. We were at it from dawn till dark, except when we ran down a back alley to mess with a certain crowd of old friends. They had a drag with the Quartermaster Department and concocted the most wonderful food in a ruined cellar. How we were spoiled! Special pieces of horse were cooked for us and in the morning all the hot cakes we could eat. I can tell you we were thankful for something hot after the long hours standing in the mud and doling out "one cigar, two squares of chewing tobacco and one pack of

cigarettes apiece" to hundreds upon hundreds of men. They hadn't had a thing in two weeks and the line in front of the Y looked a mile long!

So we spent five wonderful days and, on the sixth, the whole division came out of the lines. About dusk they marched into Récicourt and we stood at the entrance to the town waiting, our hearts in our mouths. Many rumors had preceded them, tales of horror unmentionable, and we wondered how many of those we had come to know and love would file past and how many lay "out there" in that ghastly stretch of shell-torn land.

Suddenly there was a stir. Around a bend in the road came the first column of troops. Hundreds, thousands of men passed us. Some we recognized and some we never would know again as the young lads who had marched so gayly into their first fight. Their faces were lined and their eyes glazed with fatigue and the horrors they had seen. Some wore bandages about their heads or hands, and others limped painfully as they tried to keep in step. Finally some one murmured "Here comes the 148th." It was so dark one could scarcely see but the regiment came to a stop close to where we were standing and we had a few hurried words with some of the men and officers we knew best. Only a few words, but enough to hear of scores who had "gone West" in the great drive and many more who at that moment were being rushed over the cruelly bumpy

roads to dressing stations. Our hearts were pretty heavy as we crept into our blankets that night.

The next day, while Alice and Andy ran the canteen in the village, Harriet and I filled a truck with chocolate containers, huge quantities of sugar, milk, cocoa and biscuit, and started on our way out to a big plain at one side of the Argonne Forest and where our entire division had been assembled to rest their weary bones before the next move. The plain was only a distance of two or three kilometers, but, in order to reach it, we had to wind in and out among the shell holes and the torn-up roads of the forest, making a détour of about twenty kilometers. If we hadn't been in such a hurry to get our stuff through to the boys we would have enjoyed that bumpy ride better. As it was, the woods were intensely interesting. The huge naval guns were being pulled out to continue their usefulness farther up the line and everywhere the underbrush and smaller trees had been trampled and torn up. The roads were completely covered and camouflaged in many places. The engineers had been working night and day that the ammunition might be kept moving forward to feed the colossal demand of those who at that moment had Jerry on the run.

Such roads! Every few yards a shell hole and along each side, heaps of trucks, dead horses; in fact, anything pertaining to the machinery of

war and which had broken or refused to work. There had been no time to stop. The road must be kept free of blockades and so the useless article was tipped over into the ditch (there to lie until the Salvage Department came along, months afterwards). A horse only had to go lame,— instantly he was shot and shoved aside. It was easy to see why the Artillery hadn't been able to move as quickly as the Infantry and why our particular regiment had been forced to "jump off" completely unsupported, only becoming conscious of their own barrage when they ran into it themselves as they came out!

When the Y. M. C. A. is criticized for not putting across a good job at the Front, it is by those who do not realize that roads which were not passable for ammunition were likewise impassable for Y supplies. I know of one of our men who, driving a Ford *camion* of cigarettes, was twenty-two hours going a distance of three kilometers. The shell holes on that road were deep enough to have served as the foundation of a house, and they had to be filled before the truck train could proceed.

Shortly after noon we arrived at our destination and within a few minutes we had borrowed a field kitchen, and gallons of chocolate were cooking in the great boilers. Before it was half ready the news had spread and a line of boys began to form. It ten minutes we couldn't see the end. It wound in and out, zig-zagging back

and forth across that great plain. Some one said it was half a mile long; as we heard that, we prayed that the chocolate and biscuit would last till the very end man had been warmed and filled.

I had never seen the Division together before and it was a thrilling sight to see them all assembled on that vast stretch. Thousands upon thousands of brown figures in line and some lying prostrate on the grass fast asleep.

Those who had lost their mess cups had collected old tin cans, anything, in fact, that would hold a few drops of chocolate and each one as he came up for his biscuits and dipper full of cocoa had some little remark to make. So many familiar faces and how keen they were to tell their own particular experience and such cheer and grit in the telling! Some blurted out at once "Well, Miss Y, you see Jim isn't with me now; yes, he got his," and then followed a minute description of just how it had happened. Or again, only a compressing of the lips and that terrible pain in the eyes which one comes to know so well. It was the most stirring and beautiful day I have ever spent. Artificiality was for once forgotten, every one was dealing simply and unconsciously with the elemental things of life and no one was ashamed of wearing his heart on his sleeve.

A few hours before, those same boys had been living through the worst Hell ever conceived. The fumes of mustard gas still hung about their clothes and the memory of what had been, and

what they had escaped, made them grip my hand hard, thinking perhaps of that other girl or woman across the sea who was bridging the distance with her agonized thoughts and prayers.

CHAPTER VII

THE ST. MIHIEL FRONT

Nonsard Woods, October 11th, 1918.

We returned from the Argonne to Pagny-sur-Meuse, where our Division was being reassembled for a new move but did not enjoy our sojourn there as both Harriet and I were suffering from the effects of the gas fumes which had caught us in the Argonne. On the way to Pagny, we stayed a day in Toul. That night as I was leaving the restaurant where we had supper, I ran into a lieutenant belonging to Chester Plimpton's outfit. Not having heard from Chester for some time I started to ask the Lieutenant how Chester was. Before I could get the words out of my mouth, the officer said: "Of course you have heard that Lieutenant Plimpton was killed." I simply looked at him without saying anything, and then walked out. The shock was so sudden and so terrible that I was bereft of words. I found myself in the street with the others.

Yesterday we started in pursuit of the Division, which, when last heard of, was marching toward the St. Mihiel front. The narrow-gauge railway took us as far as Bernécourt and there we piled out. Our bedrolls were dragged to the

side of the road along which we hoped soon to be traveling and, after having gleaned some information from soldiers billeted in the forlorn ruins of the town, we sat upon our baggage and waited for a kind-hearted truck to come along! Our orders had been to worm ourselves up to the Front by degrees, no women being allowed to follow the troops, as they were going straight into the lines. The process of "getting there," suggested by our Y chief, would have taken weeks, and so we had thought it best to take the direct route and surprise him.

We hadn't long to wait, for, in a few moments, an engineer truck, carrying rock and bound our way, stopped and took us and our belongings aboard. Three of us perched a-top the rock and had a fine view of the surrounding country. The other sat with the driver, who pointed out the sights along the way, mostly consisting of marvelous dugouts of German make, and shell holes, *also* of German make! After many miles we came to the crossroad and Flirey, or the few stones and ruins that marked where it had been. Our engineer friend had to drop us here, as he was going another way, so we piled off the rock and prepared to wait for another "hook."

A charming Red Cross lady gave us chocolate in a marvelously constructed shack built from débris. She told us that she was nearer the Front than any other woman and had stuck to her post during the great drive. The place was

jammed with soldiers and two of these stationed near the crossroads to stop the first ambulance going up towards our part of the line. Alice went out to see the soldiers and in a few moments came in, all excitement. As it passed along the road a car had dropped a map and one of the soldiers had picked it up. Alice and he investigated, only to find that it was a *marked* Divisional Map of great importance, showing the exact location of each regiment and company. Under the name "St. Benoit" was written "148th Regiment"! It was indeed a find, and before the soldier had pocketed the map Alice had drawn a small but exact copy.

Soon after this there were shouts and an ambulance going in our direction was stopped and we were packed in with many farewell injunctions and good wishes from the Red Cross lady and her boys.

At last we were on the last lap of the journey and were rushing across the muddy roads to Bullionville, the Divisional Headquarters. It was quite a lengthy ride and a damp and cold one. Each ruined town looked more dismal and forlorn than the last and we hoped we were going to receive a cheery welcome to make up for the gloomy, rain-drenched surroundings.

However, the chief was rather furious when he saw us and we were told to get out and back as fast as we knew how! It seemed that we were only three or four kilometers behind Mr. Boche

and that he had been shelling the town every few hours. From the masses of soldiers to be served we felt that we might be of help — but the chief was in no mood for arguing so we meekly begged an hour's grace in which to lunch with Company I (whose kitchen was right 'round the corner in a roofless barn). This was granted us on condition that, our meal over, we would start back at once. We agreed sadly.

It was maddening. Before the hour was half over we had talked with a crowd of particular friends and heard how much they needed a Y with four ladies! It was evident that the Y force wasn't nearly large enough to cope with the needs of the situation and yet here we were, four strong people being hustled off to guard our lives and save our precious skins!

After a delicious luncheon of bully beef and gold fish (salmon) we prepared to return over the road so recently traversed. As we entered the Headquarters to bid farewell to the chief, he met us at the door with these words: "Girls, you've got to stay after all. The Divisional Quartermaster and his supplies are tied up on the road miles away. The Y has been asked to turn over all its stuff so that the men will have something to eat until the Army supplies arrive. We need all the help we can get and more. So hustle round and find yourselves billets if you can."

Well, you can fancy we were all just one large

smile after that — the kind that doesn't come off.

After having installed ourselves on the ground floor of a fairly whole house, we began a minute study of our maps and the precious diagram that Alice had copied on the road. The chief had told us that we could not join our own regiment owing to the fact that it was too close to the lines and no information had been received concerning it since it marched up. He said he would send a Y man to look after its needs as soon as the road leading to St. Benoit was in any way safe to traverse. No one had risked passing along it in the daytime as it could be seen by the Germans and was in direct line of their guns.

We knew of course that the boys would be pretty low on cigarettes, etc., if they had been up there three days without supplies, also we wanted to get to our own regiment if possible and collect as much information as we could concerning the needs and location of other outfits.

About two o'clock we started off in the direction of Thiacourt, branching off at Benny, and so on along the road to St. Benoit and the 148th. It was as usual a dark, threatening day, a very good war setting, and as we met no one for a long way, we weren't stopped or questioned, and we just walked as fast as we could, hoping to reach our destination and shelter before the evening shelling started.

After leaving St. Benoit we noticed a camouflaged net stretched over the deep ditch on either

side of the road. Cleverly concealed beneath were the big guns and two or three soldiers in charge of each one. I'll never forget the look of amazement that came over their faces when they glanced up and saw four feminine heads poked over the bank. We gave them some newspapers we had brought from Toul and continued dropping them all along the road until our supply was gone. It was loads of fun. We'd drop a *Herald* on their heads and generally the men came scrambling up for a bit of a chat, wanting to know how we'd ever gotten there and where "in 'ell" we were bound for! They sent us on our way with a "Best of luck to you!"

After several hours we arrived at St. Benoit and found our Regimental Headquarters in the basement of the ruined Hôtel de Ville. The Adjutant greeted us most enthusiastically, telling us that if we had arrived a couple of hours later we shouldn't have found them as they were moving into the woods that night. We at once got busy on plans and he assured us that in another day the regiment would be settled and ready for the Y. He also told us much about where help was most needed in the rest of the Division and, by the time we started on our homeward route, we had all the information and more, that we had come for.

A truck picked us up on the way back so that we got in before any one had begun worrying about us. We found the chief and all the Y men

gathered around the maps and making their plans. Of course our information was a help as none of them had been over the ground before and, under the circumstances, we weren't scolded for having gone. One old bird raised his voice to say that he thought it outrageous for women to be at the Front and to take it upon themselves to travel on roads in the daytime that sensible people didn't risk even at night. However, he was hushed up and we were told we could leave for our regiment and their woods early the next morning, which was all we wanted.

That night, while in the middle of a delicious meal of canned duck and green peas which we had brought with us, we experienced our first barrage. The shells whistled over our heads and burst somewhere beyond us. Luckily our billet was built under the lee of the hill, so we were moderately safe. Of course there was so much noise that it was hard to sleep, but then none of us wanted to as it was our first real night at the Front.

The shells kept whistling and bursting for about three hours and we amused ourselves by trying to guess what part of the town was being smashed.

Nonsard Woods, October 12th, 1918.

Alice and I are back with our regiment at last and Andy and Harriet are off somewhere in the woods near here with their company. It's a

great satisfaction and we are pretty happy to have put our little plan through. It is now October 12th, so we have been on the road almost a week since we left the Argonne. It's been a most interesting and amusing trip and everywhere we have been fortunate in getting billets in overcrowded towns and villages, where high-rank officers had besought in vain. You can't imagine how American women are spoiled over here. For the last five nights before starting up from Toul we spent the dark hours in a different town. For some unknown reason our train always left before light and never arrived till well after dark. We traveled in circles, which seems to be the approved method of moving troops, and so have been almost a week covering a really small distance.

The regiment is encamped in lovely woods and different companies take turns holding the lines which are only a few kilometers away. Those companies that are relieved come back here to rest and that's where our work comes in. The woods are marvelously camouflaged and we trust that Jerry cannot see the winding paths and clearings when he sails about overhead. It has only been a short time since the Germans were here themselves, so of course we are at a bit of a disadvantage as they know these woods pretty well. I wish you could see the wonderful dugouts and log cabins they made for themselves. Luckily they left in such a hurry that the only

harm they were able to do was to cut all the electric wires — even the dugouts had been lighted with electricity! The houses themselves are works of art, beautifully made and perfectly equipped, including hot shower baths, wainscotted walls, rustic furniture, hanging flower baskets, everything in short that would make up a fancy Adirondack camp. Alice and I are billeted in the very nicest of them all. It is a cabin, stained brown on the inside and beautifully finished. The outside walls and roof are covered with exquisite green moss. It must have taken weeks to have completed it and collect the moss which is appliquéd on to the wood by means of wire netting. The thick growth of trees all about and the color of the house itself makes it invisible from above. Our little room is almost completely furnished with chairs, tables, and even beds that the boys have salvaged from a neighboring dugout.

The Boches left in such a hurry that the incoming Yanks found a meal cooking on their fires and lather still standing in the shaving mugs! Everything under the sun was found in the way of luxuries — and a lot of women's clothes, shoes, hats, etc. I don't see how they dared have women so close to the lines. They never expected to have to move, I guess. Every indication points to their expectation to stay and live in this alluring spot under the trees to the end of the war. All is arranged in such a permanent

FRENCH DUGOUTS NEAR BERNÉCOURT

fashion, German signs, beautifully printed in wonderful lettering and tacked on the trees.

I wish you might look in upon us at this moment — Alice doing a bit of laundry while I write at the table by the light of three fat, prosperous candles. Our room is arranged like the cabin on a ship, cots along the side, two tables with wash basins, mess kits, etc., all laid out. In one corner is a small stove; it has a ravenous appetite for dead branches and is the joy of our life. Our clothes form a tapestry about the walls, hanging as they do from numerous nails. We have one window with a heavy cardboard curtain, which slides across at night, keeping the light inside where it belongs. We look out into a tangle of reds and browns, cut here and there by paths covered with small pine logs nailed together. It's all like some strange fairy tale and I feel as though I were dreaming.

Besides our room, the cabin contains a wee kitchen, the mess room, two cooks, the Regimental Adjutant and his orderly. So we are well protected. Every one is endlessly kind and nothing is ever too much trouble to do for us. We have been given an army cart, a couple of horses and a driver, which we fill daily with supplies (not the driver but the cart) and trundle around from company to company through the woods, distributing tobacco, etc. It is a canteen on wheels this time and we are enchanted with the idea.

We weren't allowed to have a stationary can-

teen as the men congregate in a place like that and we are too near the lines. Fritzie would surely get wind of it, find out our location and send over a neat little shell or two.

Alice and I feel just like gypsies, as we spend most of our waking hours in our high cart, jolting many miles a day. The back of the cart has steps that let down. We sit on the top step and sell from the stock inside the cart. There is generally a string of boys following behind us so that when we stop we are at once surrounded by a grinning, cheerful circle of khaki.

It is beautiful beyond words now in the woods and we feel as though living in a stained glass window. When mess time comes we stop and eat at whatever camp we happen to be. Altogether it's a happy-go-lucky sort of a life and to my mind the most glorious in the world.

We have fixed up a writing and reading room in a cabin near our own. It looks so "comfy" with long tables and easy chairs about the prettiest brick fireplace you ever saw. It was once a princely Boche officer's bungalow, and he evidently took great pains with it for the ceiling is raftered and a monogram and imperial crown are painted over the mantelpiece. Along each side of the living room are three casement windows. The doors at the end open on to a rustic terrace under the trees. I wish I had pictures to send you of this extraordinary little village built way off in the deep woods miles from civilization.

Yesterday we came upon a regular beer garden — lovely little benches built into shady nooks and, in a central place a summer house for a band, surrounded by flower beds. The band stand is built in a circle and made of pine branches with the bark left on — a ring of music stands, an expectant group, just as they had been left.

Nonsard Woods, October 15th, 1918.

Such a glorious day as we've had, driving through the rainy woods, stopping and selling at each little camp and then on again. We got back after dark, soaking wet and frozen, but were soon warming before our own little fire and telling each other that no one else in the world ever had such luck as we, which all goes to show that one should never count one's chickens. At that moment we were called in to mess and, when we got there, found our officers giving hurried orders and all swallowing their suppers whole. In other words, our entire Division is once more on the move. Orders came this afternoon and our happy little home is " busted up "— to every one's utter disgust. We've done nothing but move from one Front to the other for the past five weeks. Every one expected we'd stay here for at least a month and of course after the recent hardships no one was averse to having a roof and a nice stove to enjoy for awhile. We haven't an idea where we're going but most every one seems

to think that it's back *en repos*. At any rate it means a good week at jaunting about before we arrive and we don't especially enjoy the prospect of leaving the Front for some S. O. S. (Service of Supplies). The poor boys were so happy at the prospect of a few weeks in the same place and are crazy about these woods, even if they are a hot spot when the Boches feel "peppy." But this army doesn't approve of leaving anything or any one in one place more than a second. So to-morrow we'll be packed up and once more on the road. *C'est la Guerre!* And now I must crawl into my blanket and make the most of our last night here.

Paris, October 19th, 1918.

One certainly never knows what is next on the program. Here we are back in Paris and our Division has gone up to the Flanders Front, the one place where we cannot follow, as the English do not allow any women on their Front. Of course we are more cut up than I can say but we cannot help realizing that we have been fortunate beyond our wildest dream in staying with one Division on three different fronts.

It was a wonderful trip in from the lines this last time. The first lap was made by *camion* through a sea of mud to the nearest railway, which was at Bernécourt, the way we had come. From there we were to take the next train, which runs on a narrow gauge line into Toul. When

we arrived at the station, or what remained of it (it was nothing but a ruin with no roof), we found we had four hours to wait. It was bitter cold, already getting dark and the usual fine drizzle had set in. We decided to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, so we hunted up some wood and built a roaring fire on the débris in the middle of the station. In a few moments we had our little cooking things out and some of Dad's sterno heat was warming up the food we always carry with us. Tea, bread, canned meat and sweet biscuit made a very ample repast. And, while the wind howled and the rain beat down, we sat cozily under our ruined shelter, and the fire snapped and crackled cheerily.

The French soldiers on guard along the tracks came in and warmed themselves and we refilled their pockets with cigarettes and chocolate. In return for this small attention they escorted our heavy cots and bedding rolls on board the toy train when it arrived and were altogether most kind and helpful.

We got into Toul well after midnight and began walking about, trying to find billets which were, as always, scarce as hen's teeth. Luckily for us we ran into the billeting officer, who guided us to a Red Cross hospital, where an angelic nurse put us into four cots with *real sheets* on them. We slept like logs until five when we made the early train for Paris.

Now we're at the Continental, every other place

being full, and are reveling in hot baths and soft beds.

And yet how we wish we were on the road again following that muddy, disheveled regiment of ours into Belgium!

Froidos, (A. P. O. 927),
October 28th, 1918.

Here we are, very nicely settled at our new post, and it is a big satisfaction to be working again. We have really fallen on our feet this time and are so comfortably fixed that we can't believe we're not dreaming. Our Y. M. C. A. is an old stable, with a mud floor for the moment, but very soon we expect to get an American barracks with all modern conveniences, including a roof and a plank floor. The officers have been simply splendid. The place needed a Y. M. C. A. badly, and they were so glad to see us that they have simply turned themselves inside out to make us comfortable. We have a room the like of which we haven't seen in weeks. It contains a real bed, a large mirror, chairs, and various hooks on which to hang our clothes. The lady who owns this place brings us hot water every morning. I don't suppose you can realize what that means — hot water. Even in Paris it is an absolutely unknown quantity except on Saturdays. We haven't been so clean since we came to France!

Our domicile has already taken on a home-like

aspect. My little army cot is set up in one corner. Our cooking kit is all laid out, etc. It's great to have a place we can call our own for more than half a minute! This is what they call a Replacement Camp. All casuals report here and get reassigned to their Divisions — after they leave the hospitals. Also about a thousand men per day come out of the lines and report here for a day or two of rest before they go back in again. Most of them are worn out, suffering from shell-shock, gas, etc. Our task is to entertain and feed them up before they go back. They're a pathetically, appreciative bunch, very quiet and forlorn, with hollow cheeks and large eyes. It all makes one's heart ache for them.

Alice and I have a Y man working with us; it's a bigger task than two women can handle alone. He is a Methodist minister and doesn't approve of selling playing cards in the canteen! Aside from the fact of his being a bit straight-laced, he is most kind and nice and his heart is in the right place. So I am sure we are going to have a mighty interesting time. We get boys from every division in the army and they include some of my beloved marines. Alice, Mr. C. and I mess with the officers, who are a jolly lot, and we have very good food, considering the fact that we are so far away from supplies of any sort.

Froidos, November 2nd, 1918.

The last few days have been crowded and we

have been in the canteen from morning to night. Our line forms an hour before we open in the morning, and, by the time we unlock the doors at nine, the string of boys stretches way down the street. We hate to have them stand in line and wait their turn. They get so much of that in the army. Everything seems to be a waiting line. They have to line up for inspection, for mess, to be paid, etc. But it seems to be the one and only way to handle such a big bunch, and they're wonderfully good-natured about it and cheerfully wait hours for the sake of a single package of cigarettes. For the past three days they have filed past our counter in a never-ending stream from nine in the morning till nine at night.

Our hut is a stable-effect, quite picturesque but *that* damp and draughty. We are negotiating for the French Y building, as it is scarcely used and is very grand, with a wooden floor and roof! We may get it in time. The red tape involved in such a transaction is even worse than in the States, so we are hoping to have our new home by Christmas perhaps.

The weather has come off very cold and everyone is already bundled up to the ears. I have had two ancient sweaters dyed, one green and one purple. They look good as new and are a joy to my economical soul. I tell you, you never appreciate the value of money until you earn it yourself.

I wish you could see us at mess. These offi-

cers with whom we eat are mostly older men and are really very bright and clever. They tease and "kid" each other continually so that our meals are quite jolly and hilarious. Every one is most kind. Both boys and officers do everything in the world for us.

One Captain is particularly amusing, very keen and alive but tremendously impressed with himself. He does a vast amount of talking, quoting all his celebrated friends, invariably calling them by their first names. He told me last night that he *always* wore spats at home! So you know the type. With all his funny little mannerisms he's awfully kind-hearted and just as funny and bright as he can be — but at other people's expense, I'm afraid. Woe unto the person, though, who takes *him* off.

Froidos, A. P. O. 927, A. E. F.,
November 5th, 1918.

Yesterday it was my good fortune to take the truck and go over to headquarters for supplies. Believe me, it was good to get out of our dark little canteen and spend three glorious hours in the sunshine. My idea of a good time is rushing through the clear cold air on the front seat of an army truck, the seat crowded with soldiers, and more soldiers "hooking" a ride on the back.

Last evening the scenery was impressive. The road, a straight ribbon of white, stretched for miles before one. You seemed to be rushing

right into a sea of flaming colors, the sunset, with here and there a gaunt poplar by the side of the road, tall and jet black against the sky. As we neared our little village the light had faded to the most exquisite pale shades and a few stars began to come out here and there in the heavens. Those moments between dusk and night are always to me the most precious of the whole day. There is something wonderfully mysterious about them. The trivial things of life seem very distant and somehow God and the Infinite very close. At such times those who have gone on to a higher life are all about one and it is easier to reconcile one's self to their going.

Froidos, November 6th, 1918.

It is hard to realize that I have been away sixteen months, and more. In a way it seems a life time and then again it seems only yesterday that I walked down that gang plank alone, leaving all your dear faces, on the other side of the fence. What a world of experience I moved into when I walked down that narrow plank. I can see you all now as you looked last — and then a blank until we were steaming out of the harbor and into a glorious horizon of sea and sunset sky. My! how small and alone one Mani felt then. I kept wondering how I had ever decided to take such a large step. Sixteen months and more, holding O so much of wondersome joy and, yes, a lot of pain. One can't live close to earth without that and,

after all, one would not have it otherwise. I guess it has made me older than I am. Life seems to have fallen all over itself to give me experiences of every sort and kind and it has all come in the last three years. I don't suppose many people have the privilege of such a variety of happenings in so short a time.

The peace talk has filled our minds and hearts with thoughts of home and family. We hope it won't come before it can be one we can fairly accept. Nevertheless our plans are already forming and we can see ourselves sailing into New York harbor with a big thrill and a doting family waving on the wharf. At that point one gets so excited that the only thing to prevent spontaneous combustion is several stiff hours of work and a hundred or so gallons of chocolate to make! Of course no one really expects peace at once and even after it comes in the form of armistice we shall not be released right away. However, the home going is in sight, even though the Y has a good deal of power over us. I am one, if not the oldest, of its daughters in France, in time of service, and feel so attached to it that I couldn't go back till "it's all over but the shouting."

Froidos, November 8th, 1918.

Yesterday afternoon, about three o'clock, a soldier rushed into the canteen and said a report had come to Headquarters that the Germans had quit, coming over in four different places along

the Front with white flags. Naturally no one believed the tale at the time and the poor soldier was unmercifully "kidded." However, the reports continued to come in and the French now insist that *la guerre est finie.* Personally I simply cannot believe it and a lot of the American boys are skeptical too. We have had so many false alarms, and it really seems too altogether wonderful to be true. We ought to know definitely to-day whether it is so. Most of our officers feel that it is.

One of the boys said the other day: "The Germans say 'God is with us.' But if He is, He sure must be A. W. O. L." (absent without leave).

We have moved our Y into another larger stable with more light and have had terrific crowds all the time during the past few days. Luckily we had moved and were better able to handle them in the larger place. Alice and I are living with a peasant family, consisting of Mother, Father, little Daughter and Grandmother. The little girl is about nine years old and is the most beautiful child I have seen in France. She looks like a thoroughbred and a bit out of place among her family. At night, when we come home, she is invariably sitting before the huge fireplace. She has thick, wavy hair, reaching to her waist, and in the firelight it looks like spun gold; one can't help thinking of Cinderella. She always sits on a wee stood at

one side of the fireplace, with a little bowl of bread and milk on her lap.

These people have been perfectly wonderful to us and do everything to make us comfortable. After our sojourns in ruined towns, with no civilians in them, you can fancy how spoiled and pampered we feel.

As I write, a group of excited soldiers have gathered outside. French and Americans are calling to each other along the street: "Finish la guerre," which is now the one expression they know in American French! Peace rumors constitute the most devilish propaganda the Boche devils can invent and so we must not believe anything but official announcements.

Froidos, November 11th, 1918.

Peace! Peace at last and what a variety of emotions it brings with it!

In the first place it is almost impossible to believe it. After so long it seems incredible that the war should ever end!

The wonderful news began coming in last night and all this morning it has been pouring in through every source, the wireless, the telegraph and the telephone especially. The wires must be fairly bursting with the magnitude of the words they carry.

About noon to-day an authentic report came in and at once the American locomotive that goes past here up farther front, began blowing its

whistle violently and dashing madly up and down the track. At the same time the church bells for miles around started ringing and our band came marching down the village street playing as it had never played before.

In one moment our Y stable was emptied. Alice and I stood idle behind our counter, speechlessly looking at each other and trying to take it all in. The street outside was jammed with mobs of yelling soldiers, crazy with joy. All were shooting off their rifles and automatics and shouting until they were hoarse.

Somehow I didn't feel like yelling. It all goes so deep and the great relief and joy make one silent.

We closed the Canteen and walked home. The soldiers were buying up all the champagne and other wine in the village for a mammoth celebration.

When we reached our billet, we found our little French Madame, her husband and the old grandmother clustered around the kitchen table, their heads bowed, crying silently. The French are thankful it's over but, with the joy, comes the realization of the price that has been paid. This little family has given much and all the peace in the world cannot make them forget those who will never come home.

Words are useless things at such big times. I'm all tangled up and cannot write anything consecutive.

When we came in to luncheon the officers were sending their orderlies for champagne. Hundred-franc notes were tossed across the table like so much paper. Of course we all had to drink to the Great Day — altogether a very joyful meal.

Every American is one broad grin from ear to ear. The darkies especially are all teeth and gleaming eyeballs. It does one good to be in such a happy world.

As we walked home to-night the moon came out from behind the clouds. Just think, it looks down, at last, upon a land devoid of strife. Its light is no longer a menace and I hope it is casting an especial radiance upon the graves up at the Front.

You can't imagine how strange it all seems. The night is absolutely still. Great flares illuminate the sky in the direction of the Front, but the big guns are quiet. There is not a sound except for an occasional pistol shot now and then, fired by some hilarious American. It is all weird and incredible.

CHAPTER VIII

VERDUN

Froidos, November 14th, 1918.

I wonder how the news affected you all. I imagine much the same as it has every one — a deep joy, an infinite relief, but below, through and above it all a note of sadness that no happiness can quite efface.

The realization that peace has actually come is beginning to filter through, and I have been wondering how soon my usefulness, small though it is, will be over. Of course it depends largely upon how long they keep the boys over here. While the Army is here the Y has its work cut out for it — infinitely more and harder work than when two million lads were fighting day and night. Now they will have to be entertained as never before.

This amusing little bit was given me to-day by a mischievous doughboy as a sly crack at what some of the boys consider to be the doctrines of the Y:

I

My parents told me not to smoke,—
I don't.
Nor listen to a naughty joke,—
I don't.

They made it clear I mustn't wink
At pretty girls; or even think
About intoxicating drink,—
I don't.

II

To flirt or dance is very wrong —
I don't.
Wild youths chase women, wine and song —
I don't.
I kiss no girls, not even one,
I do not know how it is done;
You wouldn't think I'd have much fun —
I don't.

Alice and I are packed and sitting on our bedding rolls; waiting for the truck that is to move us and our belongings to another place. Our usefulness here is at an end, as the Replacement Camp, to which we were attached, has moved to merge itself with several others into an enormous affair. This all happened very quickly — over night almost, and suddenly our little village is an empty and lonely place. We were asked to follow along and to open up the new Y for the bigger camps, but our regional boss had other and better plans for us. We are going further Front — about forty kilometers, and we're not a little pleased to go into the famous places so recently the scenes of heavy fighting. Naturally, now that the Armistice is signed, there are no more bombs, guns, shells, gas — in fact no danger at all. The country up there is swarming with troops and there is a tremendous need for

Y's everywhere at once. We do not expect to stay long in any one place. We will doubtless work up slowly toward Germany, setting up temporary canteens as we go. I understand that some of the Y people will go into Germany with the troops of occupation. We aren't saying it, even to each other, but we are hoping hard that we may be among the fortunate ones.

Verdun, November 18th, 1918.

We are in perhaps the most famous city of the war, up to our ears in work but very well. This is a marvelous place and the most interesting yet. I have never worked so hard. There is great congestion of troops and they need food. It's all very thrilling — the city the most extraordinary ruin, packed full of pathos, atmosphere and color. We haven't an idea of how long we shall be here — a few days may see us on the move again, perhaps to Boche lands, though this is a bit problematical. In the meantime I don't suppose we have ever been as useful and the experience is great.

British, French and our own boys, ex-prisoners in Germany, are pouring through every day. They come in batches. As soon as a batch has passed the lines the word comes from the military authorities. We women drop whatever may be the work of the moment for the infinitely more important one of meeting these pathetic beings which the Germans are returning to us. They are of all degrees. Our own boys, having more

recently been captured, show least the signs of their privations, although grateful for the little we can do. Each boy is given a bundle containing chocolate, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, a New York *Herald,* but, of all, most eagerly pocketed, are sheets of writing paper.

Last night I took my chocolate containers — and a chance reverend gentleman — to the barracks filled with released British prisoners and spent some hours pouring gallons of the "hottest" down the throats of Tommies, and I can't describe the suppressed excitement of these gaunt, hollow-eyed boys, all eagerness to help, to collect kindling, to open cans, any excuse that would give them a glimpse of, if not a word with, what for them seemed scarcely a reality,— an English-speaking woman. There were no mess-kits. These lads had nothing; even their uniforms — could you call them such — were a medley of English, German, French, odds and ends of civilian clothing, everything. They were barely covered and shivering as they came with all kinds of impromptu cups and cans to receive their chocolate. There was a marked lack of greedy shoving, a dignity and quiet gratitude, and often a second cup apologetically presented lest it be misunderstood and explained as intended for a comrade too spent to come himself. I have had so many emotions, that at present I have reached an absolutely numb state. Really it is a hectic life, this, and I begin to wonder anew

whether I was ever a civilized human before. We have literally worked like dogs, beginning at 8.30 A. M. and continuing long after dark, and even so haven't been able to reach every one. To-night we had to close down in the face of some four hundred soldiers — all clamoring for cigarettes, etc.

It seems a hopeless job, trying to supply all the army. There are six divisions near this city, not to mention these prisoners by the thousands pouring in all the time.

Alice and I are the only women here except for a lady who arrived last night and who is running a mammoth hot chocolate joint at what used to be the Verdun station. We three are living in a small room, with a roof over it and a fireplace in it — the one such remaining in the city. Our furniture consists of broken chairs and tables, salvaged from the wreckage all about us, and is a great conglomeration of elegant, slightly damaged bits that we have found standing about in corners and among piles of ruins.

At present we have no work so I've been getting up at the crack of dawn to help one of our men fix the coffee and cook the rice and bacon which starts thirty Y'ers on their daily round of work. You can't imagine the bitter cold, and especially at 6 in the morning. I creep out of my cot and down the ruined stairs to a well in the garden — it's a deep well and I stand and chatter

THE PROSPECT FOR A CANTEEN IN THE FINEST HOUSE IN TOWN

until the brimming bucket comes up, which contains our daily supply of water.

Every morning Alice and I wash in the water from our hot water bags — it has generally kept a tiny bit of warmth and isn't as icy as the water from the well.

At eight-thirty the Canteen opens and from then until dark we are kept hopping. We have taken a ruined room, filled it with supplies and serve through the broken window to a line of boys that stretches down the street for blocks and, if it ends, ends somewhere around a corner. The extreme cold has made it a bit difficult as we are practically out of doors and one gets quite numb and unable to wait on the boys as fast as is necessary. Luckily at the back of our ruined room is a dilapidated fire place where rubbish, packing cases, etc., can be burned. Alice and I take turns at the window and thaw out at intervals by the fire.

Yesterday an awfully funny thing happened. It was very cold. I had been serving at the window for some time, so that when my turn came to warm myself I was so numb I hardly felt the heat at all. I therefore stood as close to the blaze as possible, conversing the while with a crowd of doughboys who were sitting around. Suddenly a strange odor filled the room and we found that I had burned off the whole back of my skirt. I was so cold I never knew it! We almost died

laughing, although it was my only uniform skirt. I'm still wearing it as the front is perfectly good and the back a marvel of patching, the cloth being fastened together with adhesive tape from a Red Cross kit.

A day or so ago we were told that two famous preachers would join our staff for a few days, as they were touring the Front in a Packard car and couldn't go back to Paris without seeing Verdun. Every one was furious — we haven't enough food to feed ourselves and no time to show sightseers about. Also we needed help in the shape of strong hands and willing feet and *not* a pair of "sky pilots" on a Packard car.

To-day they arrived and have proved the best sports imaginable. They are Dr. Maitland Alexander of Pittsburgh and Dr. Ross Stevenson of Princeton. Alice and I put them to work sweeping out the débris in the canteen and opening packing cases, and we've never had such efficient help. The Packard car has been used like a common truck to cart supplies. As for its owners, one would never connect these two laborers with a pulpit. Dr. Alexander is the rosiest, roundest, jolliest of mortals, has helped me cook our unappetizing food, has dosed us all with a delicious non-prohibition cough medicine, and altogether has won the heart of every one.

To-morrow he is to be taught prices and will help me in the canteen while Alice is to be released to fix up a dilapidated room which was

found to-day as a reading and writing place for the boys.

I've never seen anything like this town. Most of it is smashed to pulp, fascinating, in its utter ruin, strangely beautiful. The Cathedral is still standing, though badly riddled with large shell holes, through which the sun streams in round shots of golden light. Yesterday they had High Mass to celebrate the Armistice. I stepped in for a moment, to find the place absolutely packed with soldiers, representing almost all the Allied armies. The inside of the church is in ruins but the outside is still practically intact. As I came in, the priests, in their long robes, were getting ready to celebrate mass. A number of generals and high officials were grouped near the altar and behind them, and as far as one could see, were masses of varied colored uniforms. As the military band struck up the Marseillaise, hundreds of heads were uncovered. I simply can't describe it — quite the most stirring thing I have seen or heard. The enormous number, the place, the music, the winter sunshine streaming through the ruins, and at the end the Star Spangled Banner!

Verdun, November 23rd, 1918.

We are living in primitive fashion. I have looked messy in my day but certainly nothing like this. It is so bitter cold that we don't dare undress at night and we wear the same clothes

day and night. Alice and I have donned ghastly dark blue shirts, warranted to last weeks without washing and without showing the dirt!

I wish you could see the little room which makes up our present home. The New York *Herald* is carefully pasted across the glassless window frame, so we are living in comparative luxury. The only drawback is that the room is about nine by twelve and now *four* Y ladies sleep in it — and also any other females who get stranded in Verdun over night. The room is actually the only habitable one in the city. Therefore it has become a small hotel. The floor is generally covered with *femmes* rolled up in borrowed blankets and it makes us feel a bit like a tenement house.

To-night I went down into the underground city for dinner. The French are running a regular restaurant far below the surface, and, being a bit warm, it is jammed. The food is most simple, and yet I don't see where they get it. The subterranean rooms are marvelous, finished in tile and brick, a city so far beneath the ruins up topside as to remain unreached by the storm which, for more than four years, has broken unceasingly upon the shattered town above. Aside from this descent into the depths, I have seen little of the city and none of that circle of its guardian forts. However, there isn't time for everything.

Back from *chow,* and back to the end of the

day's work, counting the canteen cash, mending all the torn bills and pinning them into piles of ten. Perhaps you can imagine what becomes of scrip and bills which have figured prominently in who knows how many crap games, been rolled into balls, squeezed in hot hands, thrust into pockets, and which come to us in pieces and tatters. It is the worst money I have ever seen, due largely I think to the fact that the Y has become noted for accepting any derelict offered, provided only it comes torn in no more than *two* pieces!

For some days there have been hanging about the reading room several officers of rank and time to spare, scowled upon by enlisted men and always underfoot. These gentlemen of leisure have lately found themselves seated about the room lapping gummed paper and with it tediously piecing my dirty money together, or staggering through the long columns of figures constituting the day's remittances from the A. E. F. to families and friends at home. The doughboys' scowl has melted to a triumphant grin at the delectable vision of himself, idle, observing his officer at work.

This reading room of Alice's is really attractive. She has pasted papers in the windows, cleared out the loose plaster, stuck posters on the walls and actually has some flowers on the little mantlepiece. She found the flowers in a sheltered corner of an old garden. Rough tables and chairs have been made and put in, and yes-

terday the chief came back from our warehouse at Ippécourt with some magazines and a victrola. The little room is so packed by day that it seems incredible another mortal could squeeze in. Yet, at night, somehow it is twice as full. No inch of floor is visible. The atmosphere is blue. Through the babel of voices and shuffle of feet, the victrola is repeating for the thousandth time today, "Around her neck, she wears a yellow ribbon,— She wears it for her lover who is *fur, fur* away."

Now for a good night's sleep. At night I put on, over my clothes, two sweaters, woolen stockings, a pair of bed socks and a woolly wrapper. My cot is made up with five pairs of blankets and my leather-and-fur coat spread over the top! Even with all this we get cold. It is freezing just now and that penetrating damp sweeps through everything.

CHAPTER IX

GERMANY

En Route to Germany,
December 24th, 1918.

It seems a strange way to spend Christmas Eve. Here we are jolting along, jumping out at every station to get a cup of coffee and what bread and cheese we can find. However, we are having a glorious time.

In our compartment is an Irish preacher, the most amusing and original old duffer you ever saw. He says he was a prohibitionist until he came to France, but it is very easy to see that he isn't one now!

We've just passed through Pont-à-Mousson and the landscape takes on the aspect of complete and utter devastation. The little villages through which we pass are heaps of ruin. The few houses that are left standing have been bitten into by huge shell holes; round chunks have been blown out of the walls and roofs and through these one sees a vista of country, or a branch or two and a patch of sky. It's terribly, horribly picturesque in its way, the crumbling stone and tile having taken on exquisite tones. Scarcely a

human in sight and certainly no women for miles and miles. A way back we saw a solitary figure standing in his little garden patch. He was looking pensively at a house — a tipsy looking object reeling to one side and gazing back at him from hollow, black eyes which once were windows.

There is something uncanny in the human attitude of these houses. I remember three at Verdun especially. They looked as if they had been hit on every side at once, and in their terror had fallen toward each other for moral support; the roofs were caved in and not a square yard of the walls but what was covered with scars and shell holes, and yet there they stand, no one sees quite how, unless it be that they hold each other up with their shattered frames.

Later.

We have crossed the border into Germany. It is another land; instead of desolation and ruin, a countryside untouched and unhurt by the hand of war. Nothing could look better kept and more prosperous than these well-groomed vineyards and fertile fields through which we are passing. After six months in mutilated northern France, it makes one's blood boil to enter this sleek land and look upon this people, complacent and comfortable in their guilt.

Some one certainly stopped the war in the nick of time to save their precious skins. Had we but been allowed to push on another week, to carry

the war into Germany and to have given them a taste of their own medicine!

Army of Occupation,
Coblenz, Germany,
December 27th, 1918.

Actually on the Rhine — and already swamped with work. To our surprise we weren't stoned or spat at when we arrived. On the contrary, every German citizen from the age of one to one hundred is laying himself or herself out to be kind to us. The streets are filled with a curious though not hostile population. Curious indeed — I have never been so stared at in all my life; if I stop to speak to any one on the street, it is a sign for an immediate gathering of all the small fry, not to mention the large.

The ordinary doughboy is enchanted beyond words by this cordial reception and, in a defiant tone, talks about the wonderful spirit with which Americans have been received. Naturally, any one who does a bit of thinking can see through any assumed manner of deference and generosity on Fritzie's part. I think most of the Y and all the officers of the Army of Occupation realize that we are up against the most insidious piece of propaganda that has ever been launched. It really is a serious proposition and one that causes, I should suppose, a great deal of anxiety in inner circles. It is said that the children in the schools are taught daily to do everything in

their power to be cordial and kind to the American soldier, but by no word or act to make him feel that Germany is a conquered nation. Thus even the children play their part. The grown-ups learn the same lesson from various sources, chief among them the Church. We understand that the sermons are written with this end in view.

An American we know had the experience of entering Coblenz before the German army had retired and saw it march out, bands playing, flags flying, wreaths of roses around the necks of the soldiers, the houses decorated with garlands and the streets packed with a cheering, joyful population, shouting and acclaiming the glorious heroes of Germany, namely its unspeakable army. Really a most extraordinary point of view.

As to their false cordiality to us, the Fritzies play it well. They work their way into our soldiers' hearts by asking them into their parlors (like the spider and the fly) and feeding them with German cakes and polite speeches. The beer also is cheaper than in France and the towns, unlike those in a land devastated by war, are clean. Altogether this is "a grand country," from the doughboys' point of view. But O, they're so pathetically unconscious of the lurking evil behind the gilded exterior. Frankly I shall be disappointed in our men if they don't wake up. It seems incredible that they could forget so soon and follow the line of least resistance towards

a bait of sweets and frothy talk. I hope and really believe it won't continue this way. As for me, if the Fritzies think they can do anything by their smirking ways they sure "have another think coming." Instead of pleasing me, it all makes me so mad that I want to bite them.

The Y is doing things on an enormous scale. It has taken over three hotels here, the mammoth Festhalle and many places for canteens, reading rooms, officers' clubs, etc. Alice and I have the job of getting the Festhalle furnished and in shape, and, as the building covers a square block, you can imagine the work involved. The Festhalle is to embrace, besides its great halls, a library of ten thousand volumes, lecture and class rooms, billiard rooms, one wet and one dry canteen with kitchens attached, a ball room and huge reading and lounge rooms. So we have our hands full and have been buying things in large quantities, for instance, fifty victrolas, hundreds of cups, plates, spoons, pots, pans, etc. Of course it is tremendously interesting. Coblenz is to be a leave center for the seven divisions that are stationed within a radius of fifty mines. Our experience at Aix has proved invaluable and with such a great and beautiful building, we should be able to make it attractive. We hope formally to open the Festhalle within a day or two, but already it is beginning to look quite attractive with new easy chairs, lots of potted posies and comfortable nooks and corners where

the soldiers can read and write. Mr. Edmunds, our old chief at Aix and now head of all leave-area work in France, came here yesterday and many plans are afoot to establish new leave centers in Germany.

In addition to the Festhalle work, we are dragged out to social functions, which must be attended, given by different headquarters, divisions, regiments, etc.

Coblenz, January 2nd, 1919.

New Year's day come and gone, with all that it generally means of activity in our Y world.

The chief event of the last few days was an important dinner with General Dickman and his staff and George W. Perkins and our staff. It was a ripper — fine speeches and a broad, splendid program laid out for the Y that ought to do a lot for every Yank in Germany. We just can't help making good here. Yet so far, we haven't really enough workers, though they are standing all over the Paris streets fairly weeping, so anxious are they to come! The passes are hard to get but that will soon be straightened out and we will have relief.

Our Festhalle really looks lovely for to-night. We've gotten up a huge masquerade ball for the enlisted men, and expect to have fifteen hundred of them. It's going to be fine with a fifty-piece band, ice cream and cake. We have been on the jump, hiring costumes. Dr. Alexander will leave

his religious activities for the evening and is coming dressed as a fairy or something equally appropriate! He weighs two hundred pounds.

Coblenz, February 1st, 1919.

The leave-center plans are working out very well and the Festhalle is now running nicely. As one enters the door there is a large information desk, at which Alice and I have been taking turns. We answer, or try to answer, all the questions that are put to us by the two thousand soldiers who are in on leave each day. One has to know the city very thoroughly and just where different things can be purchased, where the different army headquarters are located, the Chief Surgeon's office, the dentist, the post office, etc., also at what time trains, trolleys and trucks leave for a hundred or more small villages near here. The boys ask every kind of question. And sometimes the funniest. Yesterday a serious eyed lad leaned across the counter and queried: "Say, Miss Y, are you 'information'?" I answered that I was making a stab at it. "Well then, could you tell a feller how to go about making a girl fall in love with him?"

The soldiers do enjoy their day's leave, I think. We have theaters, movies, restaurants, canteens and sight-seeing trips for them, and once a week a costume dance in the big Festhalle ball room. The first dance was attended by some fifteen hundred men, though, for girls, there were only

a few of us. The nurses are not allowed to dance with enlisted men so we other girls work overtime on these occasions. Of course we have to let the boys cut in on the dances and average about fifty partners to each dance, of which there are some twenty of an evening. The men all wear hob-nailed shoes and you should see my bruised ankles! But they *do* enjoy the dancing so much that it is well worth a few bumps and bruises.

All the hotels in town are now managed by the Y and have rations from the army. The meals are very monotonous but we seem to thrive nevertheless — on beef (horse, the boys call it), cabbage, potatoes and occasionally another vegetable. We hear that there may be some cold storage eggs soon. Alice has just paid twelve marks for ten eggs to send to one of our girls who is ill.

We are getting Y recruits so slowly and there are not nearly enough of us. The work is assuming mammoth proportions.

The Y having acquired six fine big boats, the sight-seeing trips up the Rhine have begun. Saturday I went on one of the trips accompanied by four hundred and twenty boys. We steamed up to the Lorelei and back, taking about six hours for the trip. As I was the only girl on the boat, I was kept pretty much on the jump. I passed cigarettes, chocolate and cookies, and helped serve the boys their lunch in the dining saloon.

THE FESTHALLE AT COBLENZ

The boat is a fine one with large deck space, upon which we danced on the way home. The day was intensely cold, but very clear and beautiful. The vineyards, the medieval castles at every elbow, the sweep of the river, it brought back to mind our journey down this very stream leaving Germany, 1914, on that special train from Munich. How little we realized then what lies beneath the smug exterior of the Boche.

This morning I was on duty as usual at the Information Desk and this afternoon went on a trip over to the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein with a party of about fifty boys, pursued by a moving picture man cranking away at his camera.

The American flag is flying from Ehrenbreitstein's topmost turret! It will remain there until the last of our army of occupation leave for home.

Coblenz, March 10th, 1919.

We have a great number of "Bird men" in the Army of Occupation, as there are three Aëro-squadrons stationed on the hill overlooking the city. The aviators are a fine bunch and I am lucky in having many friends among them.

The cook belonging to the 94th Squadron is my special standby. He has a heart of gold and each night when I go home I find small gifts tucked into the pocket of my coat — sometimes a couple of doughnuts, done up in a piece of news-

paper, and, again, an egg or two which he has got "off" some German.

I had charge of the Officers' Club here for a few weeks until an older woman could be sent up from Paris — and, although it was a nice change, the work didn't begin to be as interesting as with the enlisted men. I was thankful for my few words of German in the management of my staff of fourteen servants drawn from the town. It was more a management of the Forty Thieves. They went off with everything edible on which they could lay their hands, those who were women hiding their ill gotten gains under their skirts. Lard, butter, and white flour were in particular favor. This cheerful condition of affairs was first discovered by two M. P.'s suspicious of the inflated skirts leaving the Club at the end of the day, who determined upon investigation and caught the culprits red-handed.

The aviators are very frequent guests at the Club, as they have nothing to do up here and time hangs heavy on their hands. When they get very desperate they do acrobatics in the air and fly under the arches of the various bridges on the Rhine, causing the square-headed population to stare with astonishment.

One Captain flies down my street and past the Club every day by way of good morning, and, as he is much too close to the ground for safety, my heart is always in my mouth. But it *is* an alluring manner of saying good morning!

Coblenz, April 21st, 1919.

The coming week is going to put every preceding one in the shade when it comes to being busy. Two new and really beautiful huts built on the grounds of the royal palace have been opened during the past few days. They have been christened Liberty Hut and Victory Hut and are the most attractive of their kind in the region of our army of occupation. Mrs. Lawrence, the head of the hut decoration department, has certainly done an excellent piece of work. She has lovely taste and the color scheme is quite enchanting. "Liberty" is being used for shows, dances and athletics and for a huge lounge. "Victory" comprises a large cafeteria run on very modern methods.

This week the Third Army is giving a carnival consisting of a horse and motor show, aëroplane exhibits, and all the usual side shows that go to make up our country fairs at home.

Instead of the usual two thousand men in on leave daily we are henceforth to have ten thousand. All of us are going to be worked to the limit of our capacity. The Y is running an extra big program this week of concerts, shows, athletic meets, etc.— it's hard to keep track of everything going on. I certainly have never been so proud of the triangle on my sleeve as I am right now. It's rather amazing how much the Y has accomplished in recent months — and a bit dampening to criticism. But all the welfare organi-

zations have done wonderfully well and I think that the army is, on the whole, very satisfied.

Coblenz, April 24th, 1919.

Yesterday at 8 A. M. we "lizzied" out to the carnival grounds and were tremendously busy there until dark. I was in the refreshment tent in charge of one counter, and, being able to speak German, was continually explaining details to the enormous staff of Mädchens who opened cans, made sandwiches and did the heavy work in the huge tent adjoining ours. Yet these damsels had to be continually sat on, as all they really wanted to do was to eat everything in sight and to flirt outrageously with the detail of American soldiers who were chopping wood. It's sickening how some of our boys welcome attention from these keg-like creatures.

We served about seven thousand boys with hot dogs (a sausage between two pieces of roll), sandwiches, doughnuts, and coffee.

It was fine working side by side with the other welfare organizations. They have all combined on this carnival. The K. of C., the Red Cross, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Salvation Army and the Y were all represented. It's an excellent thing as coördination has been very badly needed.

Coblenz, April 28th, 1919.

Though I have never worked so hard I seem to

be thriving on it as usual. Yesterday we served ten thousand men here in three hours and a half. At three o'clock Westy and I jumped out of our aprons and into a car and were whirled out to Neuwied, the headquarters of the Second Division. There we went to a *Thé Dansant* at the Y club and at 6.30 were back in Coblenz for a dinner-dance given at the Casino by the Second Cavalry. Quite some day, yet not too much of a one but what I felt fresh as a daisy the next morning. I am not quite as busy as that every day but I am always on the go twelve hours out of the twenty-four.

There has come finally a revulsion of feeling towards the Germans on the part of our boys. The Boches begin to see that they are not going to get as much out of the "Fourteen Points" as they anticipated and therefore the mask has fallen; they no longer conceal their true feelings and are just "their own sweet selves." It is a fearful revelation to some of our trusting Sammies and they are mad clear through to find that they have been taken in by the German propaganda. Americans pride themselves on being the keenest things going and of course it's humiliating to find that they are not as bright as they supposed they were!

In some of the towns about here there have been riots. Out in the Second Division American soldiers and German civilians come to blows on all occasions. One marine told me that, when

he was on guard, if any " dirty Heinie " dared set foot on his beat, he just " walked up and cracked him one over the head."

The other day we had a review for General Liggett, who has just succeeded General Dickman in supreme command here. As the colors were borne down the main street, one German civilian refused to remove his hat. Naturally it was forcibly removed by several indignant American soldiers. The lads are waking up!

Coblenz, April 30th, 1919.

The last day of April, and so cold one would think it were the middle of January. About a month ago the poor little leaves came out with a rush, but since then most of the days have been freezing and it seems as though spring would never come.

By the first of July most of the divisions that made up the original Army of Occupation will be headed towards home, I suppose. The Second Division, it is rumored, is to receive the *fourragère* from the French Army, the highest honor which the French bestow upon a division.

Coblenz, May 1st, 1919.

Some May day this! It's raining a cold drizzle, enough to dampen the spirits of every one, including the Bolsheviki, who have threatened to paint the town red to-day. We have a double guard of M. P.'s all over the city, but I don't be-

A "Y" SIGHTSEEING TRIP TO THE KAISER'S CASTLE ON THE RHINE

lieve anything very thrilling will happen. Some of the boys tell me that one end of the town is hung with red flags, but no one takes much stock in such reports.

I am wondering what people at home think about the Italian situation, and whether it is true that "America stands solid behind Wilson" in that matter, as reported in the papers.

As to the work here I have never enjoyed it or the boys so much.

Yesterday a tall, handsome Marine asked me if I would translate some French letters he had received. They proved to be from his *fiancée* in France and he and I did a prodigious amount of blushing while I tried to avoid clumsy English words that would not express the exquisite phraseology. He drank in every word and put down certain bits with the English translation, that he might use some of them in his next halting French letter to her. Imagine not being able to read a letter from the girl you're going to marry! I felt *such* an intruder, and yet he was pathetically grateful.

What wonders some of these French girls are! This one was nothing but a peasant, yet the letters were beautiful, not only in themselves but in the finish of their expression.

Coblenz, May 23rd, 1919.

I cabled some days ago, "Work here closing." More than that I cannot say, as no one can make

any plans until the Peace is signed. Of course, if it isn't, everything will doubtless be changed again and our troops will go farther into Germany. In that case no one knows whether the Y will be allowed to follow or not, although we are hoping it will.

However, it doesn't seem very probable that there will be any trouble. The Boches would gain nothing and, I think, are clever enough to see that.

At all events emergency measures have been taken. Rations are already issued for the march to Berlin and everything is in readiness for the *alerte,* which we are hoping and praying will never come. If it should, it will be interesting to see this great machine get under way at a moment's notice. Of course, the demobilization of our forces is temporarily stopped; these last troops will not be allowed to leave until relieved by others.

The Y work at Trier is already closed and all the Y'ers are being shipped to Paris. When our jobs here are over, Alice and I will leave, but the Coblenz work will be the last to close.

Last Saturday I had a wonderful trip to Wiesbaden. We motored down in about two hours and a half. It's strange that, in my many visits to Germany, I had never been there. The French are using the city for their headquarters, as you know, and it was good to see all the familiar blue uniforms again. But we were disgusted at

the amount of fraternizing going on, German women even riding in French staff cars. We lunched at the Kurhaus, facing those marvelous gardens, and spent the afternoon wandering through the many attractive shops. German helmets, sabers and even Iron Crosses were very much in evidence in the windows; these rotten people would sell their very souls for money; nothing seems sacred to them.

At six o'clock we went to "Faust," which, I admit, was beautifully given. We were obliged to start for Coblenz after the second act for all Y girls have to be home before a certain hour. It was a glorious run back. The road winds along close to the Rhine and just now the whole countryside is a-scent with lilacs; there are masses of them everywhere.

Coblenz, May 30th, 1919.
(Decoration Day.)

This morning, bright and early, a few of us got together and tied sprays of roses and other flowers to put on the graves of the soldiers who have died since coming into Germany. It has been a very warm, cloudless day, and I have never seen a more lovely one.

We motored up to the little cemetery behind Fort Alexander on a hill overlooking Coblenz and the smiling landscape all about. Such a quiet, peaceful spot, tucked away in the corner of the woods, and not a sound to break the stillness!

One hates to think of our boys buried in Germen soil, and yet, if it must be, a more ideal place could not be found.

Welfare workers were assembled, as well as a great crowd of soldiers and officers. The graves were soon covered with flowers and flags and then we all stood in a large circle waiting for the service to begin. Two or three companies of soldiers were marching up the hill, and in a moment they appeared around the bend of the road. A military band preceded them, playing the Chopin Funeral March. Those strains and the slow-measured tread brought back a hundred pictures to my mind and the many times, too, I have heard those solemn tones during the last two years.

The service was a short one. At its end, an aëroplane sailed close overhead and dropped flowers. Then came taps, the saddest and most poignantly beautiful notes in all the world. For a few moments thereafter an intense silence fell upon the crowd. Slowly the soldiers filed out and down the winding road and were lost to sight.

Coblenz, June 19th, 1919.

These last days are very full ones, and, as I realize they form the closing chapter of this strange and glorious experience, I can't help feeling a bit sad, much as I did at the end of my years at Farmington.

A verse came into my hands the other day,

written by a British Y girl but one which summarizes many of the elements of our own experience. I am sending it along:

CANTEEN "IF"

If you can hold your cup when all about you
Are dropping theirs and spilling tea on you,
If you can give right change when all men doubt you
And make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can serve and not get tired of serving
And, being asked for buns, don't deal out pies;
If you can weather shocks howe'er unswerving
And bear with disappointments and good-byes;

If, giving Self, you don't let Self be master;
Or, finding pleasure, don't make fun your aim;
If you can meet with hero and with master,
And treat the "nut" and navvy just the same;
If you can bear to hear the words you've spoken,
Altered, misquoted and misunderstood;
Or, see the cups you went to town for, broken,
And start again to make the losses good;

If you can make one heap of all the takings
And get them counted right at close of day;
And keep the ledgers from faults and fakings,
And manage just to make the business pay;
If you can force your heart and nerve and muscle
To do their work as long as they're required;
And keep your temper in the midst of hustle,
And carry on till nine, however tired;

If you can serve all sorts and not get hardened,
And talk with *savants* and not become a prig;
If real or fancied wrongs are quickly pardoned;
If small men count with you as well as big;
If you can meet each unromantic moment

With willing labor and a smiling face,
Yours is the hut and every one who's in it,
And what is more — *you* will have served the race.

Life, with all its possibilities, lies ahead. The future, with all of you in it, is an infinitely sweet promise. Soon, I know, *this* will seem a dream.

Before I let it go into the past, forever, I am living over each phase of the twenty-four months that have gone. There has been so much of beauty in them that I don't want to lose and, again, a lot of suffering and things belonging to the war that are better forgotten.

I trust I haven't come through it all without learning something. I've made a host of mistakes, but I hope I am more of a woman and a less selfish one than when I sailed away.

One can't help but learn to appreciate people more, in such an experience as mine has been, finding a sympathy and understanding that ordinary life doesn't bring.

The opportunity has been so great. Looking back, I wish I had made more of it, had had the strength of ten and that the days and nights had been twice as long.

I will reach you, I hope, not long after this letter arrives. The anticipation brings a great throb of joy. If you can, do come to meet me and stand on the dock just where I left you centuries — or was it only a moment ago?

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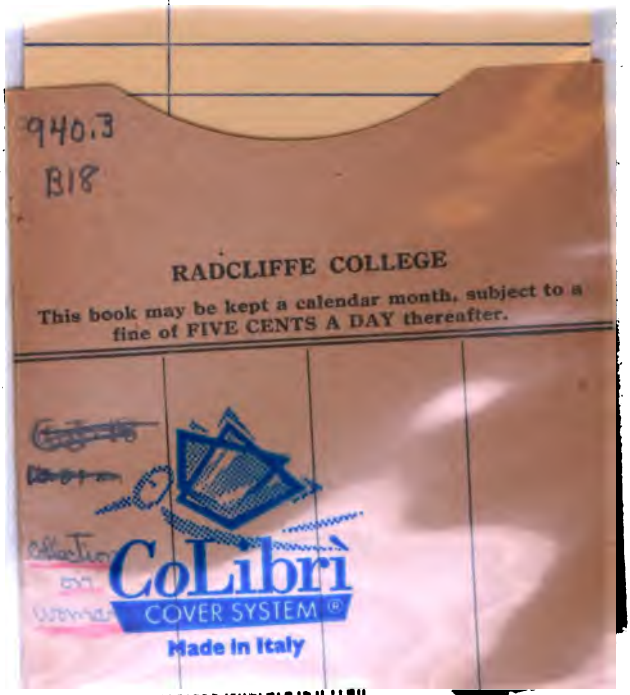
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